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THE WORKS

OF

DANIEL DEFOE

IN SIXTEEN VOLUMES

VOLUME THREE

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The Works of Daniel DeFoe

Volume III

Serious Reflections

During the Life and Surprising Adventures of

Robinson Crusoe

With His Vision of the Angelic World

Part III

THE KELMSCOTT SOCIETY
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ROBINSON CRUSOE'S PREFACE

AS the design of everything is said to be first in the intention, and last in the execution, so I come now to acknowledge to my reader that the present work is not merely the product of the two first volumes, but the two first volumes may rather be called the product of this. The fable is always made for the moral, not the moral for the fable.

I have heard that the envious and ill-disposed part of the world have raised some objections against the two first volumes, on pretence, for want of a better reason, that (as they say) the story is feigned, that the names are borrowed, and that it is all a romance; that there never were any such man or place, or circumstances in any man's life; that it is all formed and embellished by invention to impose upon the world.

I, Robinson Crusoe, being at this time in perfect and sound mind and memory, thanks be to God therefor, do hereby declare their objection is an invention scandalous in design, and false in fact; and do affirm that the story, though allegorical, is also historical; and that it is the beautiful representation of a life of unexampled misfortunes, and of a variety not to be met with in the world, sincerely adapted to and intended for the common good of mankind, and designed at first, as it is now farther applied, to the most serious uses possible.

Farther, that there is a man alive, and well known too, the actions of whose life are the just subject of these volumes, and to whom all or most part of the

story most directly alludes; this may be depended upon for truth, and to this I set my name.

The famous "History of Don Quixote," a work which thousands read with pleasure, to one that knows the meaning of it, was an emblematic history of, and a just satire upon, the Duke de Medina Sidonia, a person very remarkable at that time in Spain. To those who knew the original, the figures were lively and easily discovered themselves, as they are also here, and the images were just; and therefore, when a malicious but foolish writer, in the abundance of his gall, spoke of the quixotism of R. Crusoe, as he called it, he showed, evidently, that he knew nothing of what he said; and perhaps will be a little startled when I shall tell him that what he meant for a satire was the greatest of panegyrics.

Without letting the reader into a nearer explication of the matter, I proceed to let him know, that the happy deductions I have employed myself to make, from all the circumstances of my story, will abundantly make him amends for his not having the emblem explained by the original; and that when in my observations and reflections of any kind in this volume I mention my solitudes and retirements, and allude to the circumstances of the former story, all those parts of the story are real facts in my history, whatever borrowed lights they may be represented by. Thus the fright and fancies which succeeded the story of the print of a man's foot, and surprise of the old goat, and the thing rolling on my bed, and my jumping out in a fright, are all histories and real stories; as are likewise the dream of being taken by messengers, being arrested by officers, the manner of being driven on shore by the surge of the sea, the ship on fire, the description of starving, the story of my man Friday, and many more most material passages observed here, and on

which any religious reflections are made, are all historical and true in fact. It is most real that I had a parrot and taught it to call me by my name; such a servant a savage, and afterwards a Christian, and that his name was called Friday, and that he was ravished from me by force, and died in the hands that took him, which I represent by being killed; this is all literally true, and should I enter into discoveries many alive can testify them. His other conduct and assistance to me also have just references in all their parts to the helps I had from that faithful savage in my real solitudes and disasters.

The story of the bear in the tree, and the fight with the wolves in the snow, is likewise matter of real history; and, in a word, the "Adventures of Robinson Crusoe" are one whole scheme of a real life of eight and twenty years, spent in the most wandering, desolate, and afflicting circumstances that ever man went through, and in which I have lived so long in a life of wonders, in continued storms, fought with the worst kind of savages and man-eaters; by unaccountable surprising incidents, fed by miracles greater than that of ravens; suffered all manner of violences and oppressions, injurious reproaches, contempt of men, attacks of devils, corrections from Heaven, and oppositions on earth; have had innumerable ups and downs in matters of fortune, been in slavery worse than Turkish, escaped by an exquisite management, as that in the story of Xury, and the boat at Sallee; been taken up at sea in distress, raised again and depressed again, and that oftener perhaps in one man's life than ever was known before; shipwrecked often, though more by land than by sea. In a word, there is not a circumstance in the imaginary story but has its just allusion to a real story, and chimes part for part and step for step with the inimitable Life of Robinson Crusoe.

In like manner, when in these reflections I speak of the times and circumstances of particular actions done, or incidents which happened, in my solitude and island-life, an impartial reader will be so just to take it as it is, viz., that it is spoken or intended of that part of the real story which the island-life is a just allusion to; and in this the story is not only illustrated, but the real part I think most justly approved. For example, in the latter part of this work called the Vision, I begin thus: "When I was in my island-kingdom I had abundance of strange notions of my seeing apparitions," &c. All these reflections are just history of a state of forced confinement, which in my real history is represented by a confined retreat in an island; and it is as reasonable to represent one kind of imprisonment by another, as it is to represent anything that really exists by that which exists not. The story of my fright with something on my bed was word for word a history of what happened, and indeed all those things received very little alteration, except what necessarily attends removing the scene from one place to another.

My observations upon solitude are the same; and I think I need say no more than that the same remark is to be made upon all the references made here to the transactions of the former volumes, and the reader is desired to allow for it as he goes on.

Besides all this, here is the just and only good end of all parable or allegoric history brought to pass, viz., for moral and religious improvement. Here is invincible patience recommended under the worst of misery, indefatigable application and undaunted resolution under the greatest and most discouraging circumstances; I say, these are recommended as the only way to work through those miseries, and their success appears sufficient to support the most dead-hearted creature in the world.

Had the common way of writing a man's private history been taken, and I had given you the conduct or life of a man you knew, and whose misfortunes and infirmities perhaps you had sometimes unjustly triumphed over, all I could have said would have yielded no diversion, and perhaps scarce have obtained a reading, or at best no attention; the teacher, like a greater, having no honour in his own country. Facts that are formed to touch the mind must be done a great way off, and by somebody never heard of. Even the miracles of the blessed Saviour of the world suffered scorn and contempt, when it was reflected that they were done by the carpenter's son; one whose family and original they had a mean opinion of, and whose brothers and sisters were ordinary people like themselves.

There even yet remains a question whether the instruction of these things will take place, when you are supposing the scene, which is placed so far off, had its original so near home.

But I am far from being anxious about that, seeing, I am well assured, that if the obstinacy of our age should shut their ears against the just reflections made in this volume upon the transactions taken notice of in the former, there will come an age when the minds of men shall be more flexible, when the prejudices of their fathers shall have no place, and when the rules of virtue and religion, justly recommended, shall be more gratefully accepted than they may be now, that our children may rise up in judgment against their fathers, and one generation be edified by the same teaching which another generation had despised.

ROB. CRUSOE.

SERIOUS REFLECTIONS OF ROBINSON CRUSOE

SERIOUS REFLECTIONS *of* ROBINSON CRUSOE

INTRODUCTION

I MUST have made very little use of my solitary and wandering years if, after such a scene of wonders, as my life may be justly called, I had nothing to say, and had made no observations which might be useful and instructing, as well as pleasant and diverting, to those that are to come after me.

CHAPTER ONE

OF SOLITUDE

How incapable to make us happy, and how unqualified to a Christian life.

I HAVE frequently looked back, you may be sure, and that with different thoughts, upon the notions of a long tedious life of solitude, which I have represented to the world, and of which you must have formed some ideas, from the life of a man in an island. Sometimes I have wondered how it could be supported, especially for the first years, when the change was violent and imposed, and nature unacquainted with anything like it. Sometimes I have as much wondered why it should be any grievance or affliction, seeing upon the whole

view of the stage of life which we act upon in this world it seems to me that life in general is, or ought to be, but one universal act of solitude; but I find it is natural to judge of happiness by its suiting or not suiting our own inclinations. Everything revolves in our minds by innumerable circular motions, all centering in ourselves. We judge of prosperity and of affliction, joy and sorrow, poverty, riches, and all the various scenes of life — I say, we judge of them by ourselves. Thither we bring them home, as meats touch the palate, by which we try them; the gay part of the world, or the heavy part; it is all one, they only call it pleasant or unpleasant, as they suit our taste.

The world, I say, is nothing to us but as it is more or less to our relish. All reflection is carried home, and our dear self is, in one respect, the end of living. Hence man may be properly said to be alone in the midst of the crowds and hurry of men and business. All the reflections which he makes are to himself; all that is pleasant he embraces for himself; all that is irksome and grievous is tasted but by his own palate.

What are the sorrows of other men to us, and what their joy? Something we may be touched indeed with by the power of sympathy, and a secret turn of the affections; but all the solid reflection is directed to ourselves. Our meditations are all solitude in perfection; our passions are all exercised in retirement; we love, we hate, we covet, we enjoy, all in privacy and solitude. All that we communicate of those things to any other is but for their assistance in the pursuit of our desires; the end is at home; the enjoyment, the contemplation, is all solitude and retirement; it is for ourselves we enjoy, and for ourselves we suffer.

What, then, is the silence of life? And how is it afflicting while a man has the voice of his soul to speak to God and to himself? That man can never want conversation who is company for himself, and he that cannot converse profitably with himself is not fit for any conversation at all. And yet there are many good reasons why a life of solitude, as solitude is now understood by the age, is not at all suited to the life of a Christian or of a wise man. Without inquiring, therefore, into the advantages of solitude, and how it is to be managed, I desire to be heard concerning what solitude really is; for I must confess I have different notions about it, far from those which are generally understood in the world, and far from all those notions upon which those people in the primitive times, and since that also, acted; who separated themselves into deserts and unfrequented places, or confined themselves to cells, monasteries, and the like, retired, as they call it, from the world. All which, I think, have nothing of the thing I call solitude in them, nor do they answer any of the true ends of solitude, much less those ends which are pretended to be sought after by those who have talked most of those retreats from the world.

As for confinement in an island, if the scene was placed there for this very end, it were not at all amiss. I must acknowledge there was confinement from the enjoyments of the world, and restraint from human society. But all that was no solitude; indeed no part of it was so, except that which, as in my story, I applied to the contemplation of sublime things, and that was but a very little, as my readers well know, compared to what a length of years my forced retreat lasted.

It is evident then that, as I see nothing but what is far from being retired in the forced retreat of an

island, the thoughts being in no composure suit able to a retired condition — no, not for a great while ; so I can affirm, that I enjoy much more solitude in the middle of the greatest collection of mankind in the world, I mean, at London, while I am writing this, than ever I could say I enjoyed in eight and twenty years' confinement to a desolate island.

I have heard of a man that, upon some extraordinary disgust which he took at the unsuitable conversation of some of his nearest relations, whose society he could not avoid, suddenly resolved never to speak any more. He kept his resolution most rigorously many years ; not all the tears or entreaties of his friends — no, not of his wife and children — could prevail with him to break his silence. It seems it was their ill-behaviour to him, at first, that was the occasion of it ; for they treated him with provoking language, which frequently put him into undecent passions, and urged him to rash replies ; and he took this severe way to punish himself for being provoked, and to punish them for provoking him. But the severity was unjustifiable ; it ruined his family, and broke up his house. His wife could not bear it, and after endeavouring, by all the ways possible, to alter his rigid silence, went first away from him, and afterwards away from herself, turning melancholy and distracted. His children separated, some one way and some another way ; and only one daughter, who loved her father above all the rest, kept with him, tended him, talked to him by signs, and lived almost dumb like her father near twenty-nine years with him ; till being very sick, and in a high fever, delirious as we call it, or light-headed, he broke his silence, not knowing when he did it, and spoke, though wildly at first. He recovered of the illness afterwards, and frequently talked with his

daughter, but not much, and very seldom to anybody else.

Yet this man did not live a silent life with respect to himself; he read continually, and wrote down many excellent things, which deserved to have appeared in the world, and was often heard to pray to God in his solitudes very audibly and with great fervency; but the unjustice which his rash vow — if it was a vow — of silence was to his family, and the length he carried it, was so unjustifiable another way, that I cannot say his instructions could have much force in them.

Had he been a single man, had he wandered into a strange country or place where the circumstance of it had been no scandal, his vow of silence might have been as commendable and, as I think, much more than any of the primitive Christians' vows of solitude were, whose retreat into the wilderness, and giving themselves up to prayer and contemplation, shunning human society and the like, was so much esteemed by the primitive fathers; and from whence our religious houses and orders of religious people were first derived.

The Jews said John the Baptist had a devil because he affected solitude and retirement; and they took it from an old proverb they had in the world at that time, that "every solitary person must be an angel or a devil."

A man under a vow of perpetual silence, if but rigorously observed, would be, even on the Exchange of London, as perfectly retired from the world as a hermit in his cell, or a *solitaire* in the deserts of Arabia; and if he is able to observe it rigorously, may reap all the advantages of those solitudes without the unjustifiable part of such a life, and without the austerities of a life among brutes. For the soul of a man, under a due and regular conduct,

is as capable of reserving itself, or separating itself from the rest of human society, in the midst of a throng, as it is when banished into a desolate island.

The truth is, that all those religious hermit-like solitudes, which men value themselves so much upon, are but an acknowledgment of the defect or imperfection of our resolutions, our incapacity to bind ourselves to needful restraints, or rigorously to observe the limitations we have vowed ourselves to observe. Or, take it thus, that the man first resolving that it would be his felicity to be entirely given up to conversing only with heaven and heavenly things, to be separated to prayer and good works, but being sensible how ill such a life will agree with flesh and blood, causes his soul to commit a rape upon his body, and to carry it by force, as it were, into a desert, or into a religious retirement, from whence it cannot return, and where it is impossible for it to have any converse with mankind, other than with such as are under the same vows and the same banishment. The folly of this is evident many ways.

I shall bring it home to the case in hand thus: Christians may, without doubt, come to enjoy all the desirable advantages of solitude by a strict retirement and exact government of their thoughts, without any of these formalities, rigours, and apparent mortifications, which I think I justly call a rape upon human nature, and consequently without the breach of Christian duties, which they necessarily carry with them, such as rejecting Christian communion, sacraments, ordinances, and the like.

There is no need of a wilderness to wander among wild beasts, no necessity of a cell on the top of a mountain, or a desolate island in the sea; if the mind

be confined, if the soul be truly master of itself, all is safe; for it is certainly and effectually master of the body, and what signify retreats, especially a forced retreat as mine was? The anxiety of my circumstances there, I can assure you, was such for a time as was very unsuitable to heavenly meditations, and even when that was got over, the frequent alarms from the savages put the soul sometimes to such extremities of fear and horror, that all manner of temper was lost, and I was no more fit for religious exercises than a sick man is fit for labour.

Divine contemplations require a composure of soul, uninterrupted by any extraordinary motions or disorders of the passions; and this, I say, is much easier to be obtained and enjoyed in the ordinary course of life, than in monkish cells and forcible retreats.

The business is to get a retired soul, a frame of mind truly elevated above the world, and then we may be alone whenever we please, in the greatest apparent hurry of business or company. If the thoughts are free, and rightly unengaged, what imports the employment the body is engaged in? Does not the soul act by a differing agency, and is not the body the servant, nay, the slave of the soul? Has the body hands to act, or feet to walk, or tongue to speak, but by the agency of the understanding and will, which are the two deputies of the soul's power? Are not all the affections and all the passions, which so universally agitate, direct, and possess the body, are they not all seated in the soul? What have we to do then, more or less, but to get the soul into a superior direction and elevation? There is no need to prescribe the body to this or that situation; the hands, or feet, or tongue can no more disturb the retirement of the soul, than a man hav-

ing money in his pocket can take it out, or pay it, or dispose of it by his hand, without his own knowledge.

It is the soul's being entangled by outward objects that interrupts its contemplation of Divine objects, which is the excuse for these solitudes, and makes the removing the body from those outward objects seemingly necessary; but what is there of religion in all this? For example, a vicious inclination removed from the object is still a vicious inclination, and contracts the same guilt as if the object were at hand; for if, as our Saviour says, "He that looketh on a woman to lust after her" — that is, to desire her unlawfully — has committed the adultery already, so it will be no inverting our Saviour's meaning to say that he that thinketh of a woman to desire her unlawfully has committed adultery with her already, though he has not looked on her, or has not seen her at that time. And how shall this thinking of her be removed by transporting the body? It must be removed by the change in the soul, by bringing the mind to be above the power or reach of the allurement, and to an absolute mastership over the wicked desire; otherwise the vicious desire remains, as the force remains in the gunpowder, and will exert itself whenever touched with the fire.

All motions to good or evil are in the soul. Outward objects are but second causes; and though, it is true, separating the man from the object is the way to make any act impossible to be committed, yet where the guilt does not lie in the act only, but in the intention or desire to commit it, that separation is nothing at all, and effects nothing at all. There may be as much adultery committed in a monastery, where a woman never comes, as in any other place, and perhaps is so. The abstaining from evil, therefore, depends not only and wholly upon limiting or

confining the man's actions, but upon the man's limiting and confining his desires; seeing to desire to sin is to sin; and the fact which we would commit if we had opportunity is really committed, and must be answered for as such. What, then, is there of religion, I say, in forced retirements from the world, and vows of silence or solitude? They are all nothing. 'T is a retired soul that alone is fit for contemplation, and it is the conquest of our desires to sin that is the only human preservative against sin.

It was a great while after I came into human society that I felt some regret at the loss of the solitary hours and retirements I had in the island; but when I came to reflect upon some ill-spent time, even in my solitudes, I found reason to see what I have said above — that a man may sin alone several ways, and find subject of repentance for his solitary crimes as well as he may in the midst of a populous city.

The excellency of any state of life consists in its freedom from crime; and it is evident to our experience that some society may be better adapted to a rectitude of life than a complete solitude and retirement. Some have said that next to no company, good company is best; but it is my opinion, that next to good company, no company is best; for as it is certain that no company is better than bad company, so 't is as certain that good company is much better than no company.

In solitude a man converses with himself, and as a wise man said, he is not always sure that he does not converse with his enemy; but he that is in good company is sure to be always among his friends.

The company of religious and good men is a constant restraint from evil, and an encouragement to a religious life. You have there the beauty of religion

exemplified; you never want as well instruction in, as example for, all that is good; you have a contempt of evil things constantly recommended, and the affections moved to delight in what is good by hourly imitation. If we are alone we want all these, and are led right or led wrong, as the temper of the mind, which is sometimes too much the guide of our actions as well as thoughts, happens to be constituted at that time. Here we have no restraint upon our thoughts but from ourselves, no restraint upon our actions but from our own consciences, and nothing to assist us in our mortifications of our desires, or in directing our desires, but our own reflections, which, after all, may often err, often be prepossessed.

If you would retreat from the world, then be sure to retreat to good company, retreat to good books, and retreat to good thoughts; these will always assist one another, and always join to assist him that flies to them in his meditations, direct him to just reflections, and mutually encourage him against whatever may attack him from within him or without him; whereas to retreat from the world, as it is called, is to retreat from good men, who are our best friends. Besides, to retreat, as we call it, to an entire perfect solitude, is to retreat from the public worship of God, to forsake the assemblies, and, in a word, is unlawful, because it obliges us to abandon those things which we are commanded to do.

Solitude, therefore, as I understand by it, a retreat from human society, on a religious or philosophical account, is a mere cheat; it neither can answer the end it proposes, or qualify us for the duties of religion, which we are commanded to perform, and is therefore both irreligious in itself, and inconsistent with a Christian life many ways. Let the man that would reap the advantage of solitude, and that understands the meaning of the word, learn to retire

into himself. Serious meditation is the essence of solitude; all the retreats into woods and deserts are short of this; and though a man that is perfectly master of this retirement may be a little in danger of quietism, that is to say, of an affectation of reservedness, yet it may be a slander upon him in the main, and he may make himself amends upon the world by the blessed calm of his soul, which they perhaps who appear more cheerful may have little of.

Retiring into deserts in the first days of religion, and into abbeys and monasteries since, what have they been, or what have they been able to do, towards purchasing the retirement I speak of? They have indeed been things to be reckoned among austerities and acts of mortification, and so far might be commendable; but I must insist upon it, that a retired soul is not affected with them any more than with the hurries of company and society. When the soul of a man is powerfully engaged in any particular subject, 't is like that of St. Paul, wrapt up, whether it be into the third heaven, or to any degree of lower exaltation. Such a man may well say with the apostle above, "Whether I was in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell." It was in such a wrapt-up state, that I conceived what I call my vision of the angelical world, of which I have here subjoined a very little part.

Is it rational to believe, that a mind exalted so far above the state of things with which we ordinarily converse, should not be capable of a separation from them, which, in a word, is the utmost extent of solitude? Let such never afflict themselves that they cannot retreat from the world; let them learn to retreat in the world, and they shall enjoy a perfect solitude, as complete, to all intents and purposes, as if they were to live in the cupola of St. Paul's, or as

if they were to live upon the top of Cheviot Hill in Northumberland.

They that cannot be retired in this manner must not only retire from the world, but out of the world, before they can arrive to any true solitude. Man is a creature so formed for society, that it may not only be said that it is not good for him to be alone, but 't is really impossible he should be alone. We are so continually in need of one another, nay, in such absolute necessity of assistance from one another, that those who have pretended to give us the lives and manner of the *solitaires*, as they call them, who separated themselves from mankind, and wandered in the deserts of Arabia and Lybia, are frequently put to the trouble of bringing the angels down from heaven to do one drudgery or another for them, forming imaginary miracles to make the life of a true *solitaire* possible. Sometimes they have no bread, sometimes no water, for a long time together, and then a miracle is brought upon the stage, to make them live so long without food; at other times they have angels come to be their cooks, and bring them roast-meat; to be their physicians, to bring them physic, and the like. If St. Hilary comes in his wanderings to the river Nile, an humble crocodile is brought to carry him over upon his back; though they do not tell us whether the crocodile asked him to ride, or he asked the crocodile, or by what means they came to be so familiar with one another. And what is all this to the retirement of the soul, with which it converses in heaven in the midst of infinite crowds of men, and to whom the nearest of other objects is nothing at all, any more than the objects of mountains and deserts, lions and leopards, and the like, were to those that banished themselves to Arabia?

Besides, in a state of life where circumstances are

easy, and provision for the necessaries of life, which the best saint cannot support the want of, is quietly and plentifully made, has not the mind infinitely more room to withdraw from the world, than when at best it must wander for its daily food, though it were but the product of the field?

Let no man plead he wants retirement, that he loves solitude, but cannot enjoy it because of the embarrassment of the world; 't is all a delusion; if he loves it, if he desires it, he may have it when, where, and as often as he pleases, let his hurries, his labours, or his afflictions be what they will; it is not the want of an opportunity for solitude, but the want of a capacity of being solitary, that is the case in all the circumstances of life.

I knew a poor but good man, who, though he was a labourer, was a man of sense and religion, who, being hard at work with some other men removing a great quantity of earth to raise a bank against the side of a pond, was one day so out of himself, and wrapt up in a perfect application of his mind to a very serious subject, that the poor man drove himself and his wheelbarrow into the pond, and could not recover himself till help came to him. This man was certainly capable of a perfect solitude, and perhaps really enjoyed it, for, as I have often heard him say, he lived alone in the world: (1) Had no family to embarrass his affections; (2) his low circumstances placed him below the observation of the upper degrees of mankind; (3) and his reserved meditations placed him above the wicked part, who were those in a sphere equal to himself, among whom, as he said, and is most true, it was very hard to find a sober man, much less a good man; so that he lived really alone in the world, applied himself to labour for his subsistence, had no other business with mankind but

for necessaries of life, and conversed in heaven as effectually, and, I believe, every way as divinely, as St. Hilary did in the deserts of Lybia among the lions and crocodiles.

If this retirement, which they call solitude, consisted only of separating the person from the world — that is to say, from human society — it were itself a very mean thing, and would every way as well be supplied by removing from a place where a man is known to a place where he is not known, and there accustom himself to a retired life, making no new acquaintance, and only making the use of mankind which I have already spoken of, namely, for convenience and supply of necessary food; and I think of the two that such a man, or a man so retired, may have more opportunity to be an entire recluse, and may enjoy more real solitude than a man in a desert. For example: —

In the solitude I speak of, a man has no more to do for the necessaries of life than to receive them from the hands of those that are to furnish them, and pay them for so doing; whereas in the solitude of deserts and wandering lives, from whence all our monkish devotion springs, they had every day their food, such as it was, to seek, or the load of it to carry, and except where, as is said, they put Providence to the operation of a miracle to furnish it, they had frequently difficulties enough to sustain life; and if we may believe history, many of them were starved to death for mere hunger or thirst, and as often the latter as the former.

Those that had recourse to these solitudes merely as a mortification of their bodies, as I observed before, and delivering themselves from the temptations which society exposed them to, had more room for the pretence, indeed, than those who allege that they did it to give up themselves to prayer and

meditation. The first might have some reason in nature for the fact, as men's tempers and constitutions might lead; some having an inordinate appetite to crime, some addicted by nature to one ill habit, some to another, though the Christian religion does not guide us to those methods of putting a force upon our bodies to subdue the violence of inordinate appetite. The blessed apostle St. Paul seems to have been in this circumstance when being assaulted with what is called in the text "a thorn in the flesh;" be it what it will that is meant there, it is not to my purpose, but he prayed to the Lord thrice; that was the first method the apostle took, and thereby set a pious example to all those who are assaulted by any temptation. He did not immediately fly to austerities and bodily modifications, separating himself from mankind, or flying into the desert to give himself up to fasting, and a retreat from the world, which is the object of all private snare, but he applied himself by serious prayer to Him who had taught us to pray, "Lead us not into temptation." And the answer likewise is instructing in the case; he was not driven out as Nebuchadnezzar into the desert — he was not commanded to retire into the wilderness that he might be free from the temptation; nothing less; but the answer was, "My grace is sufficient for thee" — sufficient without the help of artificial mortification.

So that even in the case of these forcible mortifications they are not required, much less directed, for helps to meditation; for if meditation could not be practised beneficially, and to all the intents and purposes for which it was ordained a duty, without flying from the face of human society, the life of man would be very unhappy.

But doubtless the contrary is evident, and all the parts of a complete solitude are to be as effectually

enjoyed, if we please, and sufficient grace assisting, even in the most populous cities, among the hurries of conversation and gallantry of a court, or the noise and business of a camp, as in the deserts of Arabia and Lybia, or in the desolate life of an uninhabited island.

CHAPTER TWO

AN ESSAY UPON HONESTY

WHEN I first came home to my own country, and began to sit down and look back upon the past circumstances of my wandering state, as you will in charity suppose I could not but do very often, the very prosperity I enjoyed led me most naturally to reflect upon the particular steps by which I arrived to it. The condition I was in was very happy, speaking of human felicity; the former captivity I had suffered made my liberty sweeter to me; and to find myself jumped into easy circumstances at once, from a condition below the common rate of life, made it still sweeter.

One time as I was upon my inquiries into the happy concurrence of the causes which had brought the event of my prosperity to pass, as an effect, it occurred to my thoughts how much of it all depended, under the disposition of Providence, upon the principle of honesty which I met with in almost all the people whom it was my lot to be concerned with in my private and particular affairs; and I that had met with such extraordinary instances of the knavery and villainy of men's natures in other circumstances, could not but be something taken up with the miracles of honesty that I had met with among the several people I had had to do with, I mean, those whom I had more particularly to do with in the articles of my liberty, estate, or effects, which fell into their hands.

I began with my most trusty and faithful widow, the captain's wife with whom I first went to the coast of Africa, and to whom I entrusted £200, being the gain I had made in my first adventures to Guinea, as in the first volume, page 18, appears.

She was left a widow, and in but indifferent circumstances; but when I sent to her so far off as the Brazils, where I was in such a condition as she might have reasonably believed I should never have been able to come myself, and if I had, might be in no condition to recover it of her, and having myself nothing to show under her hand for the trust, yet she was so just that she sent the full value of what I wrote for, being £100; and to show, as far as in her lay, her sincere honest concern for my good, put in among many necessary things which I did not write for, I say, put in two Bibles, besides other good books, for my reading and instruction, as she said afterwards, in Popish and heathen countries, where I might chance to fall. Honesty not only leads to discharge every debt and every trust to our neighbour, so far as it is justly to be demanded, but an honest man acknowledges himself debtor to all mankind, for so much good to be done for them, whether for soul or body, as Providence puts an opportunity into his hands to do. In order to discharge this debt, he studies continually for opportunity to do all the acts of kindness and beneficence that is possible for him to do; and though very few consider it, a man is not a completely honest man that does not do this.

Upon this consideration I question much whether a covetous, narrow, stingy man, as we call him, one who gives himself up to himself, as born for himself only, and who declines the advantages and opportunities of doing good, I mean extremely so — I say, I much question whether such a man can be an honest man; nay, I am satisfied he cannot be an honest

man, for though he may pay every man his own, and be just, as he thinks it, to a farthing, yet this is part of the justice which, in the common phrase, is the greatest injustice. This is one meaning of that saying, *summum jus, summa injuria.*

To pay every man their own is the common law of honesty, but to do good to all mankind, as far as you are able, is the chancery law of honesty; and though, in common law or justice, as I call it, mankind can have no claim upon us if we do but just pay our debts, yet in heaven's chancery they will have relief against us, for they have a demand in equity of all the good to be done them that it is in our power to do, and this chancery court, or court of equity, is held in every man's breast — 't is a true court of conscience, and every man's conscience is a lord chancellor to him. If he has not performed, if he has not paid this debt, conscience will decree him to pay it, on the penalty of declaring him a dishonest man, even in his own opinion; and if he still refuses to comply, will proceed by all the legal steps of a court of conscience process, till at last it will issue out a writ of rebellion against him, and proclaim him a rebel to nature and his own conscience.

But this is by the way, and is occasioned by the observations I have made of many people who think they are mighty honest if they pay their debts, and owe no man anything, as they call it; at the same time, like true misers, who lay up all for themselves, they think nothing of the debt of charity and beneficence which they owe to all mankind.

Rich men are their Maker's freeholders; they enjoy freely the estate He has given them possession of, with all the rents, profits, and emoluments, but charged with a fee-farm rent to the younger children of the family, namely, the poor; or if you will, you may call them God's copy-holders, paying a

quit-rent to the lord of the manor, which quit-rent he has assigned for the use of the rest of mankind, to be paid in a constant discharge of all good offices, friendly, kind, and generous actions; and he that will not pay his rent cannot be an honest man, any more than he that would not pay his other just debts.

The Scripture concurs exactly with this notion of mine; the miser is called by the prophet Isaiah a vile person, one that works iniquity, and practises hypocrisy, and utters error before the Lord (Isaiah xxxii. 6). How does this appear? The very next words explain it. "He makes empty the soul of the hungry, and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail." But lest this should seem a strained text, let us read on, both before and after verse 5. "The vile person shall no more be called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful." Here the opposite to a liberal man is called a vile person, and the opposite to a bountiful man is called a churl; and in the verse following, the same vile person, as opposed to the liberal man, is called a wicked man, and the liberal man is set up a pattern for us all, in opposition to the vile, churlish, covetous wretch. — Vers. 7, 8. "The instruments also of the churl are evil: he deviseth wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right; but the liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand."

In a word, I think my opinion justified by this text, that a churl, a morose, sour disposition, a covetous, avaricious, selfish-principled man, cannot be an honest man: he does not pay the common debt of mankind to one another, nor the fee-farm or quit-rent of his estate to God, who is his great landlord or lord of the manor, and who has charged the debt upon him. I know the miser will laugh at this

notion, but I speak my own opinion, let it go as far as reason will carry it.

I come back to the examples I was giving in my private case. As the widow was honest to me, so was my good Portuguese captain ; and it is this man's original honesty that makes me speak of the honest man's debt to mankind. It was honesty, a generous honesty, that led the poor man to take me up at sea, which, if he had neglected, my boy Xury and I had perished together ; it was no debt to me in particular, but a debt to mankind, that he paid in that action, and yet he could not have been an honest man without it. You will say, if he had gone away and left me, he had been barbarous and inhuman, and deserved to be left to perish himself in the like distress ; but, I say, this is not all the case ; custom and the nature of the thing leads us to say it would have been hard-hearted and inhuman, but conscience will tell any man that it was a debt, and he could not but be condemned by the court of conscience in his own breast if the had omitted it — nay, in the sight of Heaven he had tacitly killed us, and had been as guilty of our death as a murderer, for he that refuses to save a life thrown into his hands takes it away ; and if there is a just retribution in a future state, if blood is at all required there, the blood of every man, woman, and child whom we could have saved, and did not, shall be reckoned to us at that day as spilt by our own hands ; for leaving life in a posture in which it must inevitably perish, is without question causing it to perish, and will be called so then, by whatever gilded dressed-up words we may express and conceal it now.

But I go farther, for my good Portuguese went farther with me ; he not only paid the debt he owed to Heaven in saving our lives, but he went farther — he took nothing of what I had, though, in the

common right of the sea, it was all his due for salvage, as the sailors call it; but he gave me the value of everything, bought my boat, which he might have turned adrift, my boy Xury, who was not my slave by any right, or, if he had, became free from that time; and the life of Xury, which he had saved, as a servant, was his own, yet he bought everything of me for the full value, and took nothing of me, no, not for my passage.

Here was the liberal man devising liberal things, and the sequel made good the promissory text, for by these liberal things the honest liberal man might be truly said to stand. When I came to reward him at my coming to Lisbon to sell my plantation at Brazil, then he being poor and reduced, and not able to pay even what he owed me, I gave him a reward sufficient to make his circumstances easy all his life after.

The bounty of this man to me, when first he took me up out of the sea, was the highest and most complete act of honesty — a generous honesty, laying hold of an opportunity to do good to an object offered by the providence of Heaven, and thereby acknowledging the debt he had to pay to his Maker in the persons of His most distressed creatures.

And here also let me remind my readers of what, perhaps, they seldom much regard; it is not only a gift from Heaven to us to be put in a condition of doing good, but 't is a gift, and a favour from Heaven, to have an opportunity of doing the good we are in a condition to do, and we ought to close with the opportunity, as a particular gift from above, and be as thankful for it, I say, as thankful for the occasion of doing good, as for the ability.

I might mention here the honesty of my fellow-planter in the Brazils, and of the two merchants and their sons, by whose integrity I had my share in the plantation preserved and taken care of; as also the

honesty of the public treasurer for the church there, and the like; but I am carried off in my thoughts, to enlarge upon this noble principle, from the two examples I have already mentioned, viz., the Guinea captain's widow and the Portuguese; and this in particular, because, since I came to England to reside, I have met with abundance of disputes about honesty, especially in cases where honest men come to be unhappy men, when they fall into such circumstances as they cannot be honest, or rather, cannot show the principle of honesty which is really at the bottom of all their actions, and which, but for those circumstances which entirely disable them, would certainly show itself in every branch of their lives; such men I have too often seen branded for knaves by those who, if they come into the same condition, would perhaps do the same things, or worse than they may have done.

Both my widow and my Portuguese captain fell into low circumstances, so that they could not make good to me my money that was in their hands; and yet both of them showed to me that they had not only a principle of justice, but of generous honesty too, when the opportunity was put into their hands to do so.

This put me upon inquiring and debating with myself what this subtle and imperceptible thing called honesty is, and how it might be described, setting down my thoughts at several times, as objects presented, that posterity, if they think them worth while, may find them both useful and diverting. And first, I thought it not improper to lay down the conditions upon which I am to enter upon that description, that I may not be mistaken, but be allowed to explain what I mean by honesty, before I undertake to enter upon any discourses or observations about it.

And to come directly to it, for I would make as few preambles as possible, I shall crave the liberty, in all the following discourse, to take the term honesty, as I think all English expressions ought to be taken, namely, honestly, in the common acceptation of the word, the general vulgar sense of it, without any circumlocutions or *double-entendres* whatsoever; for I desire to speak plainly and sincerely. Indeed, as I have no talent at hard words, so I have no great veneration for etymologies, especially in English, but since I am treating of honesty, I desire to do it, as I say above, honestly, according to the genuine signification of the thing.

Neither shall I examine whether honesty be a natural or an acquired virtue — whether a habit or a quality — whether inherent or accidental: all the philosophical part of it I choose to omit.

Neither shall I examine it as it extends to spirituals and looks towards religion; if we inquire about honesty towards God, I readily allow all men are born knaves, villains, thieves, and murderers, and nothing but the restraining power of Providence withholds us all from showing ourselves such on all occasions.

No man can be just to his Maker; if he could, all our creeds and confessions, litanies and supplications, were ridiculous contradictions and impertinences, inconsistent with themselves, and with the whole tenor of human life.

In all the ensuing discourse, therefore, I am to be understood of honesty, as it regards mankind among themselves, as it looks from one man to another, in those necessary parts of man's life, his conversation and negotiation, trusts, friendships, and all the incidents of human affairs.

The plainness I profess, both in style and method, seems to me to have some suitable analogy to the

subject, honesty, and therefore is absolutely necessary to be strictly followed; and I must own, I am the better reconciled, on this very account, to a natural infirmity of homely plain writing, in that I think the plainness of expression, which I am condemned to, will give no disadvantage to my subject, since honesty shows the most beautiful, and the more like honesty, when artifice is dismissed, and she is honestly seen by her own light only; likewise the same sincerity is required in the reader, and he that reads this essay without honesty, will never understand it right; she must, I say, be viewed by her own light. If prejudice, partiality, or private opinions stand in the way, the man's a reading knave, he is not honest to the subject; and upon such an one all the labour is lost — this work is of no use to him, and, by my consent, the bookseller should give him his money again.

If any man, from his private ill-nature, takes exceptions at me, poor, wild, wicked Robinson Crusoe, for prating of such subjects as this is, and shall call either my sins or misfortunes to remembrance, in prejudice of what he reads, supposing me thereby unqualified to defend so noble a subject as this of honesty, or, at least, to handle it honestly, I take the freedom to tell such, that those very wild wicked doings and mistakes of mine render me the properest man alive to give warning to others, as the man that has been sick is half a physician. Besides, the confession which I all along make of my early errors, and which Providence, you see, found me leisure enough to repent of, and, I hope, gave me assistance to do it effectually, assists to qualify me for the present undertaking, as well to recommend that rectitude of soul which I call honesty to others, as to warn those who are subject to mistake it, either in themselves or others. Heaven itself receives those

who sincerely repent into the same state of acceptance as if they had not sinned at all, and so should we also.

> They who repent, and their ill lives amend,
> Stand next to those who never did offend.

Nor do I think a man ought to be afraid or ashamed to own and acknowledge his follies and mistakes, but rather to think it a debt which honesty obliges him to pay; besides, our infirmities and errors, to which all men are equally subject, when recovered from, leave such impressions behind them on those who sincerely repent of them, that they are always the forwardest to accuse and reproach themselves. No man need advise them or lead them; and this gives the greatest discovery of the honesty of the man's heart, and sincerity of principles. Some people tell us they think they need not make any open acknowledgment of their follies, and 't is a cruelty to exact it of them — that they could rather die than submit to it — that their spirits are too great for it — that they are more afraid to come to such public confessions and recognitions than they would be to meet a cannon bullet, or to face an enemy. But this is a poor mistaken piece of false bravery; all shame is cowardice, as an eminent poet tells us that all courage is fear; the bravest spirit is the best qualified for a penitent. 'T is a strange thing that we should not be ashamed to offend, but should be ashamed to repent; not afraid to sin, but afraid to confess. This very thought extorted the following lines from a friend of mine, with whom I discoursed upon this head: —

> Among the worst of cowards let him be named,
> Who, having sinned, 's afraid to be ashamed;
> And to mistaken courage he 's betrayed,
> Who, having sinned, 's ashamed to be afraid.

But to leave the point of courage and cowardice in our repenting of our offences, I bring it back to the very point I am upon, namely, that of honesty. A man cannot be truly an honest man without acknowledging the mistakes he has made, particularly without acknowledging the wrong done to his neighbour; and why, pray, is justice less required in his acknowledgment to his Maker? He, then, that will be honest must dare to confess he has been a knave; for, as above, speaking of our behaviour to God, we have been all knaves, and all dishonest; and if we come to speak strictly, perhaps it would hold in our behaviour to one another also, for where's the man that is not chargeable by some or other of his neighbours, or by himself, with doing wrong, with some oppression or injury, either of the tongue or of the hands?

I might enlarge here upon the honesty of the tongue, a thing some people, who call themselves very honest men, keep a very slender guard upon, I mean, as to evil-speaking, and of all evil-speaking that worst kind of it, the speaking hard and unjust things of one another.

This is certainly intended by the command of God, which is so express and emphatic, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour; at least that part which is what we call slander, raising an injurious and false charge upon the character and conduct of our neighbour, and spreading it for truth.

But this is not all; that honesty I am speaking of respects all detraction, all outrageous assaults of the tongue; reproach is as really a part of dishonesty as slander, and though not so aggravated in degree, yet 't is the same in kind.

There is a kind of murder that may be committed with the tongue, that is in its nature as cruel as that

of the hand. This can never be the practice of an honest man; nay, he that practises it cannot be an honest man.

But perhaps I may come to this again, but I must go back to explain myself upon the subject a little farther in the general, and then you shall hear more of me as to the particulars.

OF HONESTY IN GENERAL

I have always observed, that however few the real honest men are, yet every man thinks himself and proclaims himself an honest man. Honesty, like heaven, has all men's good word, and all men pretend to a share of it; so general is the claim, that like a jest which is spoiled by the repetition, 't is grown of no value for a man to swear by his faith, which is, in its original meaning, by his honesty, and ought to be understood so.

Like heaven, too, 't is little understood by those who pretend most to it; 't is too often squared according to men's private interest, though at the same time the latitude which some men give themselves is inconsistent with its nature.

Honesty is a general probity of mind, an aptitude to act justly and honourably in all cases, religious and civil, and to all persons, superior or inferior; neither is ability or disability to act so any part of the thing itself in this sense.

It may be distinguished into justice and equity, or, if you will, into debt and honour, for both make up but one honesty.

Exact justice is a debt to all our fellow-creatures; and honourable, generous justice is derived from that golden rule, *Quod tibi fieri non vis alteri ne feceris;* and all this put together, makes up honesty; hon-

our, indeed, is a higher word for it, but 't is the same thing, and

> Differs from justice only in the name,
> For honesty and honour are the same.

This honesty is of so qualifying a nature, that 't is the most denominative of all possible virtues; an honest man is the best title can be given in the world; all other titles are empty and ridiculous without it, and no title can be really scandalous if this remain. 'T is the capital letter, by which a man's character will be known, when private qualities and accomplishments are worm-eaten by time; without it a man can neither be a Christian or a gentleman. A man may be a poor honest man, an unfortunate honest man; but a Christian knave, or a gentleman knave, is a contradiction. A man forfeits his character and his family by knavery, and his escutcheon ought to have a particular blot, like that of bastardy. When a gentleman loses his honesty, he ceases to be a gentleman, commences rake from that minute, and ought to be used like one.

Honesty has such a general character in the minds of men, that the worst of men, who neither practise or pretend to any part of it, will yet value it in others; no man ever could be so out of love with it as to desire his posterity should be without it; nay, such is the veneration all men have for it, that the general blessing of a father to his son is, "Pray God make thee an honest man."

Indeed, so general is the value of it, and so well known, that it seems needless to say anything in behalf of it. So far as it is found upon earth, so much of the first rectitude of nature and of the image of God seems to be restored to mankind.

The greatest mischief which to me seems to attend this virtue, like the thorn about the rose, which

pricks the finger of those who meddle with it, is pride; 't is a hard thing for a man to be very honest, and not be proud of it; and though he who is really honest has, as we say, something to be proud of, yet I take this honesty to be in a great deal of danger who values himself too much upon it.

True honest honesty, if I may be allowed such an expression, has the least relation to pride of any view in the world; 't is all simple, plain, genuine, and sincere; and if I hear a man boast of his honesty, I cannot help having some fears for him, at least, that 't is sickly and languishing.

Honesty is a little tender plant, not known to all who have skill in simples, thick sowed, as they say, and thin come up; 't is nice of growth, it seldom thrives in a very fat soil, and yet a very poor ground, too, is apt to starve it, unless it has taken very good root. When it once takes to a piece of ground, it will never be quite destroyed; it may be choked with the weeds of prosperity, and sometimes 't is so scorched up with the droughts of poverty and necessity, that it seems as if it were quite dead and gone; but it always revives upon the least mild weather, and if some showers of plenty fall, it makes full reparation for the loss the gardener had in his crop.

There is an ugly weed, called cunning, which is very pernicious to it, and which particularly injures it, by hiding it from our discovery, and making it hard to find. This is so like honesty, that many a man has been deceived with it, and has taken one for t' other in the market; nay, I have heard of some who have planted this wild honesty, as we may call it, in their own ground, have made use of it in their friendships and dealings, and thought it had been the true plant, but they always lost credit by it. And that was not the worst neither, for they had the loss who dealt with them, and who chaffered

for a counterfeit commodity; and we find many deceived so still, which is the occasion there is such an outcry about false friends, and about sharping and tricking in men's ordinary dealings in the world.

This true honesty, too, has some little difference in it, according to the soil or climate in which it grows, and your simplers have had some disputes about the sorts of it; nay, there have been great heats about the several kinds of this plant, which grows in different countries, and some call that honesty which others say is not; as, particularly, they say, there is a sort of honesty in my country, Yorkshire honesty, which differs very much from that which is found in these southern parts about London; then there is a sort of Scots honesty, which they say is a meaner sort than that of Yorkshire; and in New England I have heard they have a kind of honesty which is worse than the Scottish, and little better than the wild honesty called cunning, which I mentioned before. On the other hand, they tell us that in some parts of Asia, at Smyrna, and at Constantinople, the Turks have a better sort of honesty than any of us. I am sorry our Turkey Company have not imported some of it, that we might try whether it would thrive here or no. 'T is a little odd to me it should grow to such a perfection in Turkey, because it has always been observed to thrive best where it is sowed with a sort of grain called religion; indeed, they never thrive in these parts of the world so well apart as they do together. And for this reason, I must own, I have found that Scots honesty, as above, to be of a very good kind. How it is in Turkey I know not, for, in all my travels, I never set my foot in the Grand Seignior's dominions.

But to waive allegories; disputes about what is or is not honesty are dangerous to honesty itself, for

no case can be doubtful which does not border upon the frontiers of dishonesty; and he that resolves not to be drowned had best never come near the brink of the water.

That man who will do nothing but what is barely honest, is in great danger. It is certainly just for me to do everything the law justifies, but if I should only square my actions by what is literally lawful, I must throw every debtor, though he be poor, in prison, and never release him till he has paid the uttermost farthing; I must hang every malefactor without mercy; I must exact the penalty of every bond, and the forfeiture of every indenture. In short, I must be uneasy to all mankind, and make them so to me; and in a word, be a very knave too, as well as a tyrant, for cruelty is not honesty.

Therefore, the Sovereign Judge of every man's honesty has laid us down a general rule, to which all the particulars are resolved, *Quod tibi fieri non vis alteri ne feceris.* This is a part of that honesty I am treating of, and which indeed is the more essential of the two; this is the test of behaviour, and the grand article to have recourse to when laws are silent.

I have heard some men argue, that they are not bound to any such considerations of the indigence of persons as lead to concessions of time, or compositions with them for debts; that 't is all *ex gratia*, or the effects of policy, because circumstances lead them to judge it better to take what they can get than lose the whole.

Speaking of the letter of the law, I allow that they may be in the right.

On the other hand, a man who gives a bond for a debt, pleads he is answerable for no more than the law will force him to; that is, he may defend a suit, stand out to the last extremity, and at last keep

out of the way, so as not to have judgment or execution served on him ; he may secure his estate from the execution, as well as his person, and so never pay the debt at all, and yet in the eye of the law be an honest man ; and this part of legal literal honesty is supported only by the other, namely, the cruel part ; for really such a man, speaking in the sense of common justice, is a knave ; he ought to act according to the true intent and meaning of his obligation, and in the right of a debtor to a creditor, which is to pay him his money when it became due, not stand out to the last, because he cannot be forced to it sooner.

The laws of the country indeed allow such actions as the laws of conscience can by no means allow, as in this case of the creditor suing for his debt, and the debtor not paying it till he is forced by law. The argument made use of to vindicate the morality of such a practice, stands thus : —

If a man trusts me with his money or goods upon my common credit, or upon my word, he then takes me for his money, and depends both upon my ability and my honesty ; but if he comes and demands my bond, he quits his dependence upon my honesty, and takes the law for his security ; so that the language of such an action is, he will have a bond, that it may be in his power to make me pay him whether I will or no ; and as for my honesty, he 'll have nothing to do with it ; what relief, then, I can have against this bond by the same law to which the person refers himself, is as legal an action on my side as the other man's suing for his own is on his.

And thus the letter of the law will ruin the honesty of both debtor and creditor, and yet both shall be justified too.

But if I may give my opinion in this case, neither

of these are the honest man I am speaking of; for honesty does not consist of negatives, and 't is not sufficient to do my neighbour no personal injury in the strict sense and letter of the law; but I am bound, where cases and circumstances make other measures reasonable, to have such regard to these cases and circumstances as reason requires. Thus, to begin with the creditor to the debtor, reason requires that where a man is reduced to extremities, he should not be destroyed for debt; and what is unreasonable cannot be honest.

Debt is no capital crime, nor ever was; and starving men in prison, a punishment worse than the gallows, seems to be a thing so severe as it ought not to be in the power of a creditor to inflict it. The laws of God never tolerated such a method of treating debtors as we have since thought proper, I won't say honest, to put in practice; but since the politics of the nation have left the debtor so much at mercy by the letter of the law, 't is honest, with respect to the law, to proceed so; yet compassion is in this case thought reasonable — why shouldst thou take his bed from under him? says the text; which implies, 't is unnatural and unreasonable.

I have heard some men insist upon it, that if a man be sued wrongfully at law, he ought rather to submit to the injury than oppose the wrong by the same law; and yet I never found those gentlemen so passive in matters of law, but they would sue a debtor at law if they could not otherwise obtain their right.

I confess I cannot blame them for the last, but I blame them for pretending to the first. I am not arguing against recovering a just debt by a just law, where the person is able but unwilling to be honest; but I think pursuing the debtor to all extremities, to the turning his wife and children into the street,

expressed in the Scripture by taking his bed from under him, and by keeping the debtor in prison when really he is not able to pay it — there is something of cruelty in it, and the honest man I am speaking of can never do it.

But some may object, if I must serve all mankind as I would be served in like case, then I must relieve every beggar and release every poor debtor; for if I was a beggar I would be relieved, and if I was in prison I would be released; and so I must give away all I have. This is inverting the argument; for the meaning is in the negative still, do not to another anything, or put no hardship upon another, which you would not allow to be just if you were in their case.

Honesty is equity, every man is lord-chancellor to himself; and if he would consult that principle within him would find reason as fair an advocate for his neighbour as for himself. But I proceed.

OF THE TRIAL OF HONESTY

Necessity makes an honest man a knave; and if the world was to be the judge according to the common received notion, there would not be an honest poor man left alive.

A rich man is an honest man — no thanks to him; for he would be a double knave to cheat mankind when he had no need of it: he has no occasion to press upon his integrity, nor so much as touch upon the borders of dishonesty. Tell me of a man that is a very honest man, for he pays everybody punctually, runs into nobody's debt, does no man any wrong; very well — what circumstances is he in? Why, he has a good estate, a fine yearly income, and no business to do. The devil must have full possession of this man if he should be a knave, for

no man commits evil for the sake of it; even the devil himself has some farther design in sinning than barely the wicked part of it. No man is so hardened in crimes as to commit them for the mere pleasure of the fact — there is always some vice gratified; ambition, pride, or avarice makes rich men knaves, and necessity the poor. But to go on with this rich honest man; his neighbour, a thriving merchant, and whose honesty had as untainted a character as he can pretend to, has a rich ship cast away, or a factor abroad broke in his debt, and his bills come back protested, and he fails — is fain to abscond and make a composition. Our rich honest man flies out upon him presently — he is a knave, a rogue, and don't pay people what he owes them; and we should have a law that he that runs into debt farther than he is able to pay should be hanged, and the like. If the poor man is laid hold on by some creditor, and put in prison — ay, there let him lie, he deserves it; 't will be an example to keep others from the like. And now, when all is done, this broken merchant may be as honest a man as the other.

You say you are an honest man: how do you know it? Did you ever want bread, and had your neighbour's loaf in your keeping, and would starve rather than eat it? Was you ever arrested, and being not able by yourself or friends to make peace with your plaintiff, and at the same time having another man's money in your cash chest committed to your keeping, suffered yourself to be carried to gaol rather than break bulk and break in upon your trust? God Himself has declared that the power of extremity is irresistible, and that so, as to our integrity, that He has bid us not despise the thief that steals in such a case; not that the man is less a thief, or the fact less dishonest. But the text is

most remarkably worded for instruction in this point; don't you despise the man, but remember, if you were driven to the same exigence, you would be the same man and do the same thing, though now you fancy your principle so good; therefore, whatever his crime may be as to God, don't reproach him with it here; but you that think you stand, take heed lest you fall.

I am of the opinion that I could state a circumstance in which there is not one man in the world would be honest. Necessity is above the power of human nature, and for Providence to suffer a man to fall into that necessity is to suffer him to sin, because nature is not furnished with power to defend itself, nor is grace itself able to fortify the mind against it.

What shall we say to five men in a boat at sea, without provision, calling a council together, and resolving to kill one of themselves for the others to feed on, and eat him? With what face could the four look up and crave a blessing on that meat? With what heart give thanks after it? And yet this has been done by honest men, and I believe the most honest man in the world might be forced to it; yet here is no manner of pretence, but necessity, to palliate the crime. If it be argued it was the loss of one man to save the four, it is answered, but what authority to make him die to save their lives? How came the man to owe them such a debt? 'T was robbery and murder; 't was robbing him of his life, which was his property, to preserve mine; 't is murder, by taking away the life of an innocent man; and at best 't was doing evil that good may come, which is expressly forbidden.

But there is a kind of equity pleaded in this case. Generally, when men are brought to such a pass, they cast lots who shall be the man, and the voluntary

consent of the party makes it lawful (God Himself being supposed to determine who shall be the man), which I deny; for it is in no man's power legally to consent to such a lot; no man has a right to give away his own life; he may forfeit it to the law and lose it, but that 's a crime against himself, as well as against the law; and the four men might by our law have been tried and hanged for murder. All that can be said is, that necessity makes the highest crimes lawful, and things evil in their own nature are made practicable by it. From these extremes of necessity we come to lighter degrees of it, and so let us bring our honest man to some exigencies. He would not wrong any man of a farthing; he could not sleep if he should be in anybody's debt; and he cannot be an honest man that can.

That we may see now whether this man's honesty lies any deeper than his neighbour's, turn the scale of his fortune a little. His father left him a good estate; but here come some relations, and they trump up a title to his lands, and serve ejectments upon his tenants, and so the man gets into trouble, hurry of business, and the law. The extravagant charges of the law sink him of all his ready money, and, his rents being stopped, the first breach he makes upon his honesty (that is, by his former rules), he goes to a friend to borrow money, tells him this matter will be over, he hopes, quickly, and he shall have his rents to receive, and then he will pay him again; and really he intends to do so. But here comes a disappointment; the trial comes on, and he is cast, and his title to the estate proves defective; his father was cheated, and he not only loses the estate, but is called upon for the arrears of the rent he has received; and, in short, the man is undone, and has not a penny to buy bread or help himself, and, besides this, cannot pay the money he borrowed.

Now, turn to his neighbour the merchant, whom he had so loudly called knave for breaking in his trade; he by this time has made up with his creditors and got abroad again, and he meets him in the street in his dejected circumstances. "Well," says the merchant, "and why don't you pay my cousin, your old neighbour, the money you borrowed of him?" — "Truly," says he, "because I have lost all my estate, and can't pay; nay, I have nothing to live on." — "Well, but," returns the merchant, "wan't you a knave to borrow money, and now can't pay it?" — "Why, truly," says the gentleman, "when I borrowed it I really designed to be honest, and did not question but I should have my estate again, and then I had been able also, and would have paid him to a penny, but it has proved otherwise; and though I would pay him if I had it, yet I am not able." — "Well, but," says the merchant again, "did you not call me knave, though I lost my estate abroad by unavoidable disasters, as you have lost yours at home? Did you not upbraid me because I could not pay? I would have paid everybody, if I could, as well as you." — "Why, truly," says the gentleman, "I was a fool; I did not consider what it was to be brought to necessity; I ask your pardon."

Now, let's carry on this story. The merchant compounds with his creditors, and paying every one a just proportion as far as 't will go, gets himself discharged; and being bred to business, and industrious, falls into trade again, and raises himself to good circumstances, and at last a lucky voyage or some hit of trade sets him above the world again. The man, remembering his former debts, and retaining his principle of honesty, calls his old creditors together, and though he was formerly discharged from them all, voluntarily pays them the remainder of

their debts. The gentleman being bred to no business, and his fortune desperate, goes abroad and gets into the army, and behaving himself well, is made an officer, and, still rising by his merit, becomes a great man; but in his new condition troubles not his head with his former debts in his native country, but settles in the court and favour of the prince under whom he has made his fortunes, and there sets up for the same honest man he did before.

I think I need not ask which of these two is the honest man, any more than which was the honest penitent, the Pharisee or the publican.

Honesty, like friendship, is tried in affliction; and he that cries out loudest against those who in the time of this trial are forced to give ground, would perhaps yield as far in the like shock of misfortune.

To be honest when peace and plenty flow upon our hands, is owing to the blessing of our parents; but to be honest when circumstances grow narrow, relations turbulent and quarrelsome, when poverty stares at us, and the world threatens, this blessing is from Heaven, and can only be supported from thence. God Almighty is very little beholding to them who will serve Him just as long as He feeds them. 'T was a strong argument the devil used in that dialogue between Satan and his Maker about Job. "Yes, he is a mighty good man, and a mighty just man, and well he may while you give him everything he wants: I would serve you myself, and be as true to you as Job, if you would be as kind and as bountiful to me as you are to him: but now, do but lay your finger on him; do but stop your hand a little, and cut him short; strip him a little, and make him like one of those poor fellows that now bow to him, and you will quickly see your good man be like other men; nay, the passion he will be in at his losses will make him curse you to your face."

'T is true the devil was mistaken in the man, but the argument had a great deal of probability in it, and the moral may be drawn, both from the argument and from the consequences:

1. That 't is an easy thing to maintain the character of honesty and uprightness when a man has no business to be employed in, and no want to press him.

2. That when exigencies and distresses pinch a man, then is the time to prove the honesty of his principle.

The prosperous honest man can only by boasting tell the world he is honest, but the distressed and ruined honest man hears other people tell him he is honest.

In this case, therefore, since allowance must be made for human infirmities, we are to distinguish between an accident and a practice. I am not pleading to encourage any man to make no scruple of trespassing upon his honesty in time of necessity; but I cannot condemn every man for a knave who by unusual pressures, straits, difficulties, or other temptation, has been left to slip and do an ill action, as we call it, which perhaps this person would never have stooped to if the exigence had not been too great for his resolution. The Scripture says of David, "He was a man after God's own heart;" and yet we have several things recorded of him, which, according to the modern way of censuring people in this age, would have given him the character of a very ill man. But I conceive the testimony of David's uprightness, given us so authentically from the Scripture, is given from this very rule, that the inclination of his heart and the general bent of his practice were to serve and obey his great Sovereign Benefactor, however human frailty, backed with extremities of circumstances or powerful temptations,

might betray him to commit actions which he would not otherwise have done. The falling into a crime will not denominate a man dishonest; for *humanum est errare*. The character of a man ought to be taken from the general tenor of his behaviour, and from his allowed practice. David took the shew-bread from the priests, which it was not lawful for him to eat. David knew that God, who commanded the shew-bread should not be eaten, had, however, commanded him by the law of Nature not to be starved, and therefore, pressed by his hunger, he ventures upon the commandment. And the Scripture is very remarkable in expressing it, "David, when he was an hungry." And the occasion for which our blessed Lord Himself quoted this text is very remarkable, viz., to prove that things otherwise unlawful may be made lawful by necessity. — Matt. xii. 4.

Another time, David in his passion resolves the destruction of Nabal and all his family, which, without doubt, was a great sin; and the principle which he went upon, to wit, revenge for his churlish and saucy answer to him, was still a greater sin; but the temptation, backed by the strength of his passion, had the better of him at that time; and this upright, honest man had murdered Nabal and all his house if God had not prevented him.

Many instances of like nature the Scripture has left upon record, giving testimony to the character of good men, from the general practice and bent of their hearts, without leaving any reproach upon them for particular failings, though those sins have been extraordinary provoking, and in their circumstances scandalous enough.

If any man would be so weak as from hence to draw encouragement to allow himself in easy trespasses upon his honesty, on the pretence of necessi-

ties, let him go on with me to the further end of this observation, and find room for it if he can.

If ever the honest man I speak of, by whatsoever exigence or weakness, thus slips from the principle of his integrity, he never fails to express his own dislike of it; he acknowledges upon all occasions, both to God and to man, his having been overcome, and been prevailed upon to do what he does not approve of; he is too much ashamed of his own infirmity to pretend to vindicate the action, and he certainly is restored to the first regulation of his principles as soon as the temptation is over. No man is fonder to accuse him than he is to accuse himself, and he has always upon him the sincere marks of a penitent.

'T is plain from hence that the principle of the man's integrity is not destroyed, however he may have fallen, though seven times a day; and I must, while I live, reckon him for an honest man.

Nor am I going about to suppose that the extremities and exigencies which have pressed men of the best principles to do what at another time they would not do, make those actions become less sinful, either in their own nature or circumstances. The guilt of a crime with respect to its being a crime, viz., an offence against God, is not removed by the circumstances of necessity. It is without doubt a sin for me to steal another man's food, though it was to supply starving nature; for how do I know whether he whose food I steal may not be in as much danger of starving for want of it as I? And if not, 't is taking to my own use what I have no right to, and taking it by force or fraud; and the question is not as to the right or wrong, whether I have a necessity to eat this man's bread or no, but whether it be his or my own? If it be his, and not my own, I cannot do it without a manifest contempt of God's law, and breaking the eighth article of it,

"Thou shalt not steal." Thus, as to God, the crime is evident, let the necessity be what it will.

But when we are considering human nature subjected, by the consequences of Adam's transgression, to frailty and infirmity, and regarding things from man to man, the exigencies and extremities of straitened circumstances seem to me to be most prevailing arguments why the denomination of a man's general character ought not by his fellow-mortals (subject to the same infirmities) to be gathered from his mistakes, his errors, or failings; no, not from his being guilty of any extraordinary sin, but from the manner and method of his behaviour. Does he go on to commit frauds, and make a practice of his sin? Is it a distress? Is it a storm of affliction and poverty has driven him upon the lee-shore of temptation? Or is the sin the port he steered for? A ship may by stress of weather be driven upon sands and dangerous places, and the skill of the pilot not be blamable; but he that runs against the wind, and without any necessity, upon a shelf which he sees before him, must do it on purpose to destroy the vessel, and ruin the voyage.

In short, if no man can be called honest but he who is never overcome to fall into any breach of this rectitude of life, none but he who is sufficiently fortified against all possibility of being tempted by prospects, or driven by distress, to make any trespass upon his integrity — woe be unto me that write, and to most that read! where shall we find the honest man?

The Scripture is particularly expressive of this in the words, "The righteous man falleth seven times a day, and riseth again." Why, this is very strange; if a man come to commit seven crimes in a day, that is, many, for the meaning is indefinite, can this be an honest man? What says the world of him? Hang

him; he is a knave, a rascal, a dishonest fellow. This is the judgment of men; but in the judgment of Scripture this may be a righteous man.

The main design of this head, and the proper application of it, is to tell us we ought not to be too hasty to brand our brother for his sins, his infirmities, or misfortunes, since he that is dishonest in your eyes, by a casual or other crime which he commits, may rise from that disaster by a sincere repentance, and be to-morrow an honester man than thyself in the eyes of his Maker.

But here I am assaulted with another censorious honest man. Here you talk of falling to-day, and rising again to-morrow; sinning and repenting; why, here is a fellow has cheated me of £500, and he comes canting to me of his repentance, tells me he hopes God has forgiven him, and it would be hard for me to call to remembrance what God has wiped out; he is heartily sorry for the fault, and the like, and begs my pardon, that is, begs my estate indeed. For what is all this to my money? Let him pay me, and I will forgive him too. God may forgive him the sin, but that's nothing to my debt.

Why, truly, in answer to this in part, you are in the right if the man be able to make you any satisfaction, and does not do it; for I question not, but every trespass of this nature requires restitution as well as repentance; restitution as far as the possible power of the party extends; and if the last be not found, the first is not likely to be sincere.

But if the man either is not able to make you any restitution at all, or does make you restitution to the utmost of his capacity, and then comes and says as before, then the poor man is in the right, and you in the wrong; for I make no question likewise to affirm, and could prove it by unanswerable arguments, he may be an honest man who cannot

pay his debts, but he cannot be an honest man who can, and does not.

Innumerable accidents reduce men from plentiful fortunes to mean and low circumstances; some procured by their own vices and intemperance; some by infirmities, ignorance, and mere want of judgment to manage their affairs; some by the frauds and cheats of other men; some by mere casualty and unavoidable accidents, wherein the sovereignty of Providence shows us, that the race is not to the swift, or the battle to the strong, or riches to men of understanding.

First, some by vices and intemperance are reduced to poverty and distress. Our honest man cannot fall in the misfortunes of this class, because there the very poverty is a sin, being produced from a sinful cause. As it is far from being allowed as an excuse to a murderer to say he was in drink, because it is excusing a crime with a crime, so for a man to ruin his fortunes, as the prodigal in the Gospel, with riotous living, all the effects are wicked and dishonest, as they partake of the dishonesty of the cause from whence they proceed; for he cannot be an honest man who wants wherewith to pay his debts after having spent what should have discharged them in luxury and debauches.

Secondly, some by ignorance and want of judgment to manage their affairs are brought to poverty and distress. These may be honest men, notwithstanding their weakness, for I won't undertake that none of our honest men shall be fools. 'T is true the good man is the wise man as to the main part of wisdom, which is included in his piety; but many a religious man, who would not do any wrong wilfully to his neighbour, is obliged at last to injure both his own family and other people's for want of discretion to guide him in his affairs, and to judge

for himself; and therefore I dare not tax all our fools with being knaves, nor will I say but such a man may be honest. Some will say that such a man should not venture into business which he is not able to manage, and therefore 't was the vice of his understanding, and, like the case in the first article, is excusing a fault with a fault.

I cannot allow this, for if I am asked why a fool ventures into trade, I answer, because he is a fool, not because he is a knave.

> If fools could their own ignorance discern,
> They 'd be no longer fools, because they 'd learn.

If you would convince a man that he wants discretion, you must give him discretion to be convinced; till then he cannot know he has it not, because he has it not. No man is answerable either to God or man for that which he never was master of. The most proper expression that ever I met with in this nature, was of a certain idiot or natural which a gentleman of my acquaintance kept in his family, who being on his deathbed, was observed to be very pensive and much concerned about dying. The gentleman sent a minister to him, who, as well as he could to his understanding, discoursed with him about death and judgment to come. The poor creature, who was hardly ever able to give a rational answer to a question before, after hearing him very attentively, broke out into tears with this expression — that he hoped God would not require anything of him that He had not given him judgment to understand. Whatever it may be as to the soul, I am positive, in the case of human affairs, no man is answerable to man for any more than his discretion. Events are not in our power; a man may be nicely honest in life, though he may be weak enough in judgment.

Thirdly, some are ruined, and are yet merely passive, being either defrauded and cheated by knaves, or plundered and rifled by thieves, or by immediate casualties, as fire, enemies, storms, floods, and the like; these are things which neither touch the man's honesty nor his discretion. Thus Job was, by God's permission and the agency of the devil, reduced in a moment from a plentiful estate to be as naked as he came out of his mother's womb. I would fain ask those who say no man can be an honest man if he does not pay his debts, who paid Job's debts if he owed any, and where was his dishonesty if he did not pay them? I still readily grant that he cannot be an honest man who does not pay his debts if he can; but if otherwise, then the words ought to be altered, and they should say, he cannot be an honest man who borrows any money, or buys anything upon his credit; and this cannot be true.

But since I have led myself into the argument, I cannot but make a small digression concerning people who fail in trade. I conceive the greatest error of such is their terror about breaking, by which they are tempted while their credit is good, though their bottom be naught, to push farther in, expecting, or at least hoping, by the profits of some happy voyage, or some lucky hit, as they call it, to retrieve their circumstances, and stand their ground.

I must confess I cannot vindicate the honesty of this; for he who, knowing his circumstances to be once naught, and his bottom worn out, ought not in justice to enter into any man's debt, for then he trades on their risk, not on his own, and yet trades for his own profits, not theirs. This is not fair, because he deceives the creditor, who ventures his estate on that bottom which he supposes to be good, and the other knows it not. Nay, though he really pays this creditor, he is not honest; for, in conscience,

his former creditors had a right to all his effects in proportion to their debts; and if he really pays one all, and the rest but a share, 't is a wrong to the whole.

I would therefore advise all tradesmen who find their circumstances declining, as soon, at least, as they first discern themselves to be incapable of paying their debts, if not while yet they can pay every one all, make a full stop, and call all people together; if there is enough to pay them all, let them have it; if not let them have their just shares of it. By this means you will certainly have God's blessing, and the character of an honest man left to begin again with; and creditors are often prevailed with, in consideration of such a generous honesty, to throw back something to put such a man in a posture to live again, or by further voluntary credit and friendship to uphold him. This is much better also with respect to interest, as well as honesty, than to run on to all extremities, till the burden falls too heavy either for debtor or creditor to bear. This would prevent many of the extremities, which, I say, puts the honesty of a man to so extraordinary a trial.

An honest principle would certainly dictate to the man, if it were consulted with, that when he knows he is not able to pay, it is not lawful for him to borrow. Taking credit is a promise of payment: a promise of payment is tacitly understood, and he cannot be honest who promises what he knows he cannot perform, as I shall note more at large on another head. But if the man be paid, yet it was not an honest act; 't was deceiving the man, and making him run a greater risk than he knew of, and such a risk as he would not have run had he known your circumstances and bottom as you do; so that here is deceit upon deceit.

This I know is a disputed point, and a thing which

a great many practise who pass for very honest men in the world, but I like it not the better for that; I am very positive, that he who takes my goods on the foot of his credit, when, if he should die the next day, he knows his estate will not pay me five shillings in the pound, though he should not die, but does pay me at the time appointed, is as much guilty of a fraud as if he actually robbed my house. Credit is a received opinion of a man's honesty and ability, his willingness to pay, and his having wherewith to pay; and he who wants either of these, his credit is lame. Men won't sell their goods to a litigious, quarrelsome man, though he be never so rich, nor to a needy man, though he be never so honest. Now if all the world believe that I am honest and able, and I know that I am not the last, I cannot be the first if I take their goods upon credit; 't is vain to pretend men trade upon the general risk of men's appearance, and the credit of common fame, and all men have an equal hazard. I say no; men may venture their estates in the hands of a flourishing bankrupt, and he by virtue of his yet unshaken credit is trusted; but he cannot be honest that takes this credit, because he knows his circumstances are quite otherwise than they are supposed to be, that the man is deceived, and he is privy to the deceit.

This digression is not so remote from the purpose as I expected when I began it: the honesty that I am speaking of chiefly respects matters of commerce, of which credit and payment of debt are the most considerable branches.

There is another article in trade, which many very honest men have made familiar to themselves, which yet, I think, is in no case to be defended, and that is relating to counterfeit money. Custom, before the old money was suppressed in England, had prevailed so far upon honesty, that I have seen some men put

all their brass money among their running cash, to be told over in every sum they paid, in order to have somebody or other take it; I have heard many people own they made no scruple of it, but I could never find them give one good reason to justify the honesty of it.

First, they say it comes for money, and it ought to go so: to which I answer, that is just as good a reason as this: A has cheated me, and therefore I may cheat B. If I have received a sum of money for good, and knowing not that any of it is otherwise offer it in payment to another, this is just and honest; but if, on this other man's telling it over, he returns me a piece of brass or counterfeit money which I change again, and afterwards, knowing this to be such, offer the same piece to another, I know no worse fraud in its degree in the world, and I doubt not to prove it so beyond contradiction.

If the first person did not take this piece of money, it was because, being both watchful and skilful, he could discover it; and if I offer it to another, 't is with an expectation that he, being either less watchful or less skilful, shall overlook it, and so I shall make an advantage of my neighbour's ignorance, or want of care.

I 'll put some parallel cases to this, to illustrate it. Suppose a blind man comes into a shop to buy goods of me, and giving me a guinea to change, I shall give him the remainder in bad money, would not everybody say 't was a barbarous thing? Why, the other is all one, for if the person be ignorant of money, he is blind as to the point in hand; and nothing can be more unfair than to take the advantage.

Suppose, again, a young boy or a servant newly entered in trade is sent to buy goods, and by his master's order he asks for such a commodity; and you, presuming upon the rawness of the messenger,

deliver a sort of a meaner quality, and take the full price of him; would you grudge to be used scurvily for such a trick? Why, no less or better is offering brass for silver, presuming only the want of care or skill in the receiver shall pass it unobserved.

"Ay, but," says a learned tradesman, who would be thought honester than ordinary, "I always change it again, if it be brought back." Yes, sir, so does a pickpocket give you your handkerchief again when you have fastened on him, and threatened him with the mob. The matter, in short, is this: if the man whom you have cheated can cheat nobody else, then no thanks to you; when he comes to you, and charges the fraud upon you, you 'll make satisfaction, because, if you won't, the law will compel you to it.

But if the fraud may be carried on, as you are manifestly willing, consenting, and instrumental in it that it should, behold the consequence: your first sin against honesty is multiplied in all the hands through whom this piece of bad money knowingly so passes, till at last it happens to go single to a poor man that can't put it off, and the wrong and injury may issue where it was wanted to buy bread for a starving family.

All the excuses I could ever meet with could never satisfy me that it can consist with honesty to put brass or copper away for gold or silver, any more than it would to give a blind messenger sand instead of sugar, or brown bread instead of white.

OF HONESTY IN PROMISES

"A man is known by his word, and an ox by his horns," says an old English proverb. If I understand the true meaning of it, 't is that the honesty of a man is known by his punctually observing his word,

as naturally and plainly as any creature is known by the most obvious distinction. 'T is the peculiar quality of an honest man, the distinguishing mark to know him by. His word or promise is as sacred to him in all his affairs in the world as the strongest obligation which can be laid on him; nor is it a thing formed by him from settled resolutions, or measures of policy taken up of course to raise or fix his reputation, but it is the native produce of his honest principle; 't is the consequence, and his honesty is the cause; he ceases to be honest when he ceases to preserve this solemn regard to his word.

If he gives his word, any man may depend upon it for the safety of his life or estate; he scorns to prevaricate or shift himself off from the punctual observance of it, though it be to his loss.

I can't abate an honest man an inch in the punctual observance of a promise made upon parole if it be in the man's possible power to perform it, because there seems to be something too base to consist with honesty in the very nature of a man that can go back from his word.

The reverence our ancestors paid to their promises, or word passed, I am of the opinion, gave that remarkable brand of infamy and scandal upon the affront of giving the lie. A gentleman, which is, in short, the modern term for an honest man, or a man of honour, cannot receive a greater reproach than to be told he lies; that is, that he forfeits his word, breaks his veracity; for the minute he does that he ungentlemans himself, disgraces the blood of his family, degenerates from his ancestors, and commences rake, scoundrel, and anything.

Some people, who have run their points of honour to the extremes, are of the opinion that this affront of the lie ought not to be given to anything they call a gentleman, or that calls himself so, till he has

so far exposed himself to all other degrees of infamy as to bear kicking or caning, and the like; that after this, when he breaks his word, he may be told he lies, or anything else; but till then the very thing itself is so intolerable an abuse, that the person who ventures to trespass so foully on the rules of good manners deserves not the honour of fair play for his life; but as some beasts of prey are refused the fair law of the field, and are knocked down in every hedge, so these, like bullies and mere rakes, may be pistolled in the dark and stabbed at the corner of an alley; that is to say, any measure may be used with them to dismiss them from the society of mankind, as fellows not sufferable in the commonwealth of good manners.

I do not argue for these extremes; but I instance in this to testify the veneration all good men have for the word or promise of an honest man, and the esteem which the integrity of the mind, expressed by a zealous regard to the words of the mouth, has obtained in the world. The French, when they express themselves in vindication of their honour, always bring it about by this, *Je suis homme de parole*, I am an honest man, or a man of my word; that is, I am a man that may be trusted upon my parole, for I never break my word.

Such was the value put upon the promises of men in former time, that a promise of payment of money was recoverable in our courts by law, till the inconveniences proved so many that an Act was made on purpose to restrain it to a sum under ten pounds. But to this day if a man promises marriage to a woman, especially if she has granted him any favours upon that condition, the laws of the land, which therein have regard to the laws of honour, will oblige him to make it good, and allow it to be a sufficient plea to forbid his marrying with anybody else.

There are innumerable instances of the veneration all nations pay to the expressive article of human veracity. In the war you meet with frequent instances of prisoners dismissed by a generous enemy upon their parole, either to pay their ransom, or to procure such or such conditions, or come back and surrender themselves prisoners; and he that should forfeit this parole would be posted in the enemy's army, and hissed out of his own.

I know nothing a wise man would not choose to do rather than, by breaking his word, give the world such an undeniable testimony of his being a knave. This is that good name which Solomon says is better than life, and is a precious ointment, and which when a man has once lost he has nothing left worth keeping. A man may even hang himself out of the way, for no man that looks like a man will keep his company.

When a man has once come to breaking his word, no man that has any value for his reputation cares to be seen in his company; but all good men shun him, as if he were infected with the plague.

There are men, indeed, who will be exceeding punctual to their words and promises, who yet cannot be called honest men, because they have other vices and excursions that render them otherways wicked. These give their testimony to the beauty of honesty by choosing it as the best mask to put a gloss upon their actions, and conceal the other deformities of their lives; and so honesty, like religion, is made use of to disguise the hypocrite, and raise a reputation upon the shadow, by the advantage it takes of the real esteem the world has of the substance. I say of this counterfeit honesty, as is said of religion in like cases. If honesty was not the most excellent attainment, 't would not be made use of as the most specious pretence; nor is there a more exquisite way for a man to play the hypocrite, than to pretend an

extraordinary zeal to the performance of his promises; because, when the opinion of any man's honesty that way has spread in the thoughts of men, there is nothing so great but they will trust him with, nor so hard but they will do it for him.

All men reverence an honest man: the knaves stand in awe of him, fools adore him, and wise men love him; and thus is virtue its own reward.

Honest men are in more danger from this one hypocrite than from twenty open knaves; for these have a mark placed upon them by their general character, as a buoy upon a rock to warn strangers from venturing upon it. But the hypocrites are like a pit covered over, like shoals under water, and danger concealed which cannot be seen. I must confess I have found these the most dangerous, and have too deeply suffered by throwing myself on their protestations of honesty. The esteem I always entertained of the most beautiful gift God has bestowed, or man could receive, has made me the easier to be deceived with the resemblance of it.

So much as I, or any one else, by the viciousness of our own nature, or the prevailing force of accidents, snares, and temptations, have deviated from this shining principle, so far as we have been foolish as well as wicked, so much we have to repent of towards our Maker, and be ashamed of towards our neighbour.

For my part, I am never backward to own, let who will be the reader of these sheets, that to the dishonour of my Maker, and the just scandal of my own honesty, I have not paid that due regard to the rectitude of this principle which my own knowledge has owned to be its due; let those who have been juster to themselves, and to the Giver of it, rejoice in the happiness, rather than triumph over the infirmity.

But let them be sure they have been juster on their own parts; let them be positive that their own integrity is untainted, and would abide all the trials and racks that a ruined fortune, strong temptations, and deep distresses, could bring it into; let them not boast till these dangers are past, and they put their armour off; and if they can do it, then I will freely acknowledge they have less need of repentance than I.

Not that I pretend, as I noted before, and shall often repeat, that these circumstances render my failing, or any man's else, the less a sin, but they make the reason why we that have fallen should rather be pitied than reproached by those who think they stand, because, when the same assaults are made upon the chastity of their honour, it may be every jot as likely to be prostituted as their neighbour's.

And such is the folly of scandal, as well as the blindness of malice, that it seldom fixes reproach upon the right foot. I have seen so much of it, with respect to other people, as well as to myself, that it gives me a very scoundrel opinion of all those people whom I find forward to load their neighbours with reproach. Nothing is more frequent in this case than to run away with a piece of a man's character, in which they err, and do him wrong, and leave that part of him untouched which is really black, and would bear it; this makes me sometimes, when with the humblest and most abasing thoughts of myself I look up, and betwixt God and my own soul, cry out, "What a wretch am I!" at the same time smile at the hare-brained enemy, whose tongue, tipped with malice, runs ahead of his understanding, and missing the crimes for which I deserve more than he can inflict, reproaches me with those I never committed. Methinks I am ready to call him back, like the huntsman, when the dogs run upon the foil, and say,

"Hold, hold, you are wrong; take him here, and you have him."

I question not but 't is the same with other people; for when malice is in the heart, reproach generally goes a mile before consideration, and where is the honesty of the man all this while? This is trampling upon my pride, *sed majori fastu*, but with greater pride; 't is exposing my dishonesty, but with the highest knavery; 't is a method no honest man will take, and when taken, no honest man regards; wherefore, let none of these sons of slander take satisfaction in the frequent acknowledgments I am always ready to make of my own failing, for that humility with which I always find cause to look into my own heart, where I see others worse, and more guilty of crimes than they can lay to my charge, yet makes me look back upon their weakness with the last contempt, who fix their impotent charges where there is not room to take hold, and run away with the air and shadow of crimes never committed.

I have instanced this, not at all on my own account, for 't is not worth while, for if I am injured, what 's that to troubling the world with when I am forgotten? But while I am examining the nicest article in the world, honesty, I cannot but lay down these three heads from the preceding observations: —

1. He who is forward to reproach the infirmities of other men's honesty, is very near a breach of his own.

2. He that hastily reproaches another without sufficient ground, cannot be an honest man.

3. Where there may be sufficient ground of reproach, yet an honest man is always tender of his neighbour's character from the sense of his own frailty.

But I return to honesty, as it affects a man's pledging his word, which is the counterpart of his

principle, and this because, as I said, I should chiefly regard this honesty as it concerns human affairs, conversation, and negotiation.

And here I meet with a tradesman come just in from dunning one of his neighbours. "Well, I have been at a place for money," says he, "but I can get none. There 's such an one, he passes for an honest man, but I am sure he is a great rogue to me, for he has promised me my money a long time, but puts me off still from time to time; he makes no more of breaking his word, than of drinking a glass of beer. I am sure he has told me forty lies already. This is one of your honest men; if all such honest men were hanged, we should have a better trade." And thus he runs on.

If all such honest men were hanged, they that were left might have a better trade; but how many of them would there be?

Now, though I shall in no way vindicate men's hasty promises absolutely to perform what is doubtful in the event, yet I cannot agree that every man who, having promised a payment, does not perform it to his time, is a knave or a liar. If it were so, the Lord have mercy upon three parts of the city.

Wherefore, to state this matter clearly, it must be taken a little to pieces, and the articles spoken to apart.

First. Without question, when a man makes a promise of payment to another on a set day, knowing in his own thoughts that it is not probable he should be capable to comply with it, or really designing not to comply with it, or not endeavouring to comply with it, 't is a deceit put upon the party, 't is a premeditated formal lie, the man that made it is a stranger to honesty; he is a knave, and everything that is base and bad. But,

Secondly. Promises ought to be understood, both

by the person to whom and the person by whom they are made, as liable to those contingencies that all human affairs and persons are liable to, as death, accidents, disappointments, and disorder. Thus, if a man who ought to pay me to-day tells me, "Sir, I cannot comply with you to-day; but if you call for it next week, you shall have it;" if I may put this answer into plainer English, and I suppose the man to be an honest man, I cannot understand his meaning otherwise than thus: —

"Sir, I acknowledge your money is due. I have not cash enough by me to pay you to-day, but I have several running bills, and several persons who have promised me money, which I doubt not I shall receive against such a time; and if you call then, I make no question but I shall be able to do it; and if it is possible for me to pay you, I will do it at that time without fail."

I confess it were as well to express themselves thus at large in all the appointments people make for payment, and would the persons who make them consider it, they would do so; but custom has prevailed in our general way of speaking, whereby all things that are subject to the common known contingents of life, or visible in the circumstances of the case, are understood without being expressed. For example: —

I make an appointment of meeting a man positively at such a town, such a certain day or hour. If I were talking to a Turk or a pagan that knows nothing, or believes nothing of supreme Providence, I would say — If the Lord of heaven and earth, that governs all my actions, please to preserve and permit me. But when I am talking to a Christian, it should seem to be so universally supposed that every appointment is subjected and submits to the government of Providence, that the repetition would be needless; and that when a man promises positively to meet, 't is

with a general *sub-intelligitur*, a reserve as natural as Nature itself, to the Divine permission. All men know, that unless I am alive I cannot come there, or if I am taken sick, both which may easily happen, I shall disappoint him. And, therefore, if he should urge me again to come without fail, and I should reply, "I won't fail if I am alive and well," the man ought to take it for an affront, and ask me if I take him for a fool, to think if I am taken sick, I should come with my bed at my back, or if death should intervene, he had occasion to speak with my ghost.

In this sense, a tradesman who promises payment of money at a set time; first, 't is supposed he has it not now in his hands, because he puts off the person demanding to a further day, and promises to comply with it then. This promise, therefore, can be understood no otherwise than that he expects to receive money by that time. Now, if this man, by the like disappointments from other men, or any other involuntary casualty, is really and *bonâ fide* unable to comply with the time of promised payment, I cannot see but this may befall an honest man, and he neither designing to fail when he promised, not being able to prevent the accident that obliged him to do it, nor in any way voluntary in the breach, is not, in my opinion, guilty of a lie, or breach of his honour, though he did not make those verbal reserves in the promises he had given.

If every man who cannot comply with promised payments should be thus branded with lying and dishonesty, then let him who is without the sin cast the stone, for nobody else ought to do it.

'T is true, there is a difference between an accident and a practice; that is, in short, there is a difference between him who meets with a great many occasions thus to break his word, and he that meets with but few; but if it be a crime, he that commits it once is

no more an honest man than he that commits it forty times; and if it be not a crime, he that does it forty times is as honest as he that has occasion to do it but once.

But let no man take encouragement from hence to be prodigal of his word, and slack in his performance; for this nice path is so near the edge of the pit of knavery, that the least slip lets you fall in.

These promises must have abundance of circumstances to bring the honest man out of the scandal.

As, first. The disappointments which occasioned this breach of his word must have been unforeseen and unexpected, otherwise the expectation of performing his promise was ill grounded, and then his honesty is answerable for the very making the promise, as well as the breaking it.

Second. No endeavours must be wanting to comply with the promise, otherwise 't is wrong to say, "I am disappointed, and can't make good my word." The man ought to say, "Sir, I have disappointed myself by my negligence or wilfulness, and have obliged myself to break my word;" or, in English, "Sir, I am a knave; for though I made you a promise which I might have performed, I took no care about it, not valuing the forfeiture of my word."

If, then, the case is so nice, though, in the strictness of speaking, such a disappointment may oblige an honest man to break his word, yet every honest man, who would preserve that character to himself, ought to be the more wary, and industriously avoid making such absolute unconditional promises, because we are to avoid the circumstances of offence.

But as to the nature of the thing, 't is plain to me that a man may in such cases be obliged to break his word unwillingly; and nothing can be a fraud or dishonest action in that case, which is not either voluntary in itself, or the occasion voluntarily procured.

OF RELATIVE HONESTY

As honesty is simple and plain, without gloss and pretence, so it is universal. He that may uphold an untainted reputation in one particular, may be justly branded with infamy in another. A man may be punctual in his dealings, and a knave in his relations; honest in his warehouse, and a knave at his fireside; he may be a saint in his company, a devil in his family; true to his word, and false to his friendship; but whosoever he be, he is no honest man. An honest man is all of a piece the whole contexture of his life; his general conduct is genuine, and squared according to the rules of honesty; he never runs into extremes and excesses on one hand or other.

I confess I find this thing which they call relative honesty very little thought of in the world, and that which is still worse, 't is very little understood. I 'll bring it down to but a few examples, some of which frequently happen among us, and will therefore be the more familiarly received.

There are relative obligations entailed on us in our family circumstances, which are just debts, and must be paid, and which, in a word, a man can no more be honest if he does not make conscience of discharging, than he can in the case of the most unquestionable debts between man and man.

The debts from children to parents, and from wives to their husbands, are in a manner relatively changed, and the obligation transferred into the order of religious duties. God, the guide and commander of all subordination, has, as it were, taken that part into His own hand. 'T is rather called a duty to Him than a relative duty only. But if men take this for a discharge to them of all relative

obligations to wives and to children, or that God had less required one than the other, they must act upon very wrong principles.

Nature, indeed, dictates in general a man's providing subsistence for his family, and he is declared to be so far from a Christian that he is worse than an infidel that neglects it. But there are other parts of our obligations which honesty calls upon us to perform.

A wife and children are creditors to the father of the family, and he cannot be an honest man that does not discharge his debt to them, any more than he could if he did not repay money borrowed to a stranger; and not to lead my reader on to intricate and disputed particulars, I instance principally in those that nobody can dispute, as, first, education. By this I mean, not only putting children to school, which some parents think is all they have to do with or for their children, and indeed with some is all that they know how to do, or are fit to do; I say, I do not mean this only, but several other additional cares, as: (1.) Directing what school, what parts of learning are proper for them, what improvements they are to be taught; (2.) studying the genius and capacities of their children in what they teach them. Some children will voluntarily learn one thing, and can never be forced to learn another, and for want of which observing the genius of children we have so many learned blockheads in the world, who are mere scholars, pedants, and no more. (3.) But the main part of this debt which relative honesty calls upon us to pay to our children, is the debt of instruction, the debt of government, the debt of example. He that neglects to pay any of these to his family is a relative knave, let him value himself upon his honesty in paying his other debts as much as he will.

'T is a strange notion men have of honesty and of their being honest men, as if it related to nothing but tradesmen or men who borrow and lend, or that the title was obtained by an ordinary observance of right and wrong between man and man. 'T is a great mistake; the name of an honest man is neither so easily gained, nor so soon lost as these men imagine. David was a very honest man, notwithstanding his passion and revenge in the case of Nabal, his murder in the case of Uriah, or his adultery in the case of Bathsheba. The intent and main design of his life was upright; and whenever he fell by the power of that temptation that overcame him, he rose again by repentance.

Let no vain men flatter themselves with the pride of their honesty in mere matters of debtor and creditor, though that is also absolutely necessary and essential to an honest man.

But trace this honest man home to his family. Is he a tyrant or a churl to his wife? Is he a stranger to the conduct and behaviour of his children? Is he an Eli to their vices? Are they uninstructed, uncorrected, unexhorted, ungoverned, or ill governed? That man is a knave, a relative knave; he neither does his duty to God, or pays the debt of a husband, or of a parent, to his wife or his family.

Secondly, after the debt of education, there is the debt of induction due from us to our children. The debt from a parent is far from ending when the children come from school, as the brutes who turn their young off from them when they are just able to pick for themselves. It is our business, doubtless, to introduce them into the world, and to do it in such a manner as suits the circumstances we are in, as to their supply, and the inclinations and capacities of our children. This is a debt the want of paying which makes many children too justly re-

proach their parents with neglecting them in their youth, and not giving them the necessary introduction into the world, as might have qualified them to struggle and shift for themselves.

Not to do this is to ruin our children negatively on one hand, as doing it without judgment and without regard to our family circumstances, and our children's capacities, is a positive ruining them on the other. I could very usefully run out this part into a long discourse on the necessity there is of consulting the inclinations and capacities of our children in our placing them out in the world. How many a martial spirit do we find damned to trade, while we spoil many a good porter, and convert the able limbs and bones of a blockhead into the figure of a long robe, or a gown and cassock?

How many awkward clumsy fellows do we breed to surgery or to music, whose fingers and joints Nature originally designed, and plainly showed it us by their size, were better suited for the blacksmith's sledge or the carpenter's axe, the waterman's oar or the carman's whip?

Whence comes it to pass that we have so many young men brought to the bar and to the pulpit with stammering tongues, hesitations and impediments in their speech, unmusical voices, and no common utterance; while, on the other hand, Nature's cripples — bow-legged, battle-hammed, and half-made creatures — are bred tumblers and dancing-masters?

I name these because they occur most in our common observation, and are all miserable examples, where the children curse the knavery of their fathers in not paying the debt they owed to them as parents, in putting them to employments that had been suitable to their capacities, and suitable to what Nature had cut them out for.

I came into a public-house once in London, where

there was a black mulatto-looking man sitting, talking very warmly among some gentlemen, who, I observed, were listening very attentively to what he said, and I sat myself down and did the like. 'T was with great pleasure I heard him discourse very handsomely on several weighty subjects. I found he was a very good scholar, had been very handsomely bred, and that learning and study were his delight; and, more than that, some of the best of science was at that time his employment. At length I took the freedom to ask him if he was born in England?

He replied with a great deal of good humour in the manner, but with an excess of resentment at his father, and with tears in his eyes, "Yes, yes, sir, I am a true-born Englishman; to my father's shame be it spoken, who, being an Englishman himself, could find it in his heart to join himself to a negro woman, though he must needs know the children he should beget would curse the memory of such an action, and abhor his very name for the sake of it. Yes, yes," says he, repeating it again, "I am an Englishman, and born in lawful wedlock; happy had it been for me, though my father had gone to the devil for whoredom, had he lain with a cook-maid, or produced me from the meanest beggar-woman in the street. My father might do the duty of nature to his black wife; but, God knows, he did no justice to his children. If it had not been for this damned black face of mine," says he, then smiling, "I had been bred to the law, or brought up in the study of divinity; but my father gave me learning to no manner of purpose, for he knew I should never be able to rise by it to anything but a learned valet de chambre. What he put me to school for I cannot imagine; he spoiled a good tarpauling when he strove to make me a gentleman. When he had resolved to marry a slave and lie with a slave,

he should have begot slaves, and let us have been bred as we were born ; but he has twice ruined me — first, with getting me a frightful face, and then going to paint a gentleman upon me."

It was a most affecting discourse indeed, and as such I record it ; and I found it ended in tears from the person, who was in himself the most deserving, modest, and judicious man that I ever met with under a negro countenance in my life.

After this story I persuaded myself I need say no more to this case ; the education of our children, their instruction, and the introducing them into the world, is a part of honesty, a debt we owe to them ; and he cannot be an honest man that does not, to the utmost of his ability and judgment, endeavour to pay it.

All the other relative obligations, which family circumstances call for the discharge of, allow the same method of arguing for, and are debts in their proportion, and must be paid upon the same principle of integrity. I have neither room nor is there any occasion to enlarge upon them.

CHAPTER THREE

OF THE IMMORALITY OF CONVERSATION, AND THE VULGAR ERRORS OF BEHAVIOUR

CONVERSATION is the brightest and most beautiful part of life; 't is an emblem of the enjoyment of a future state, for suitable society is a heavenly life; 't is that part of life by which mankind are not only distinguished from the inanimate world, but by which they are distinguished from one another. Perhaps I may be more particularly sensible of the benefit and of the pleasure of it, having been so effectually mortified with the want of it. But as I take it to be one of the peculiars of the rational life that man is a conversable creature, so it is his most complete blessing in life to be blessed with suitable persons about him to converse with. Bringing it down from generals to particulars, nothing can recommend a man more, nothing renders him more agreeable, nothing can be a better character to give of one man to another, next to that of his being an honest and religious man, than to say of him that he is very good company.

How delightful is it to see a man's face always covered with smiles, and his soul shining continually in the goodness of his temper; to see an air of humour and pleasantness sit ever upon his brow, and to find him on all occasions the same, ever agreeable to others and to himself — a steady calm of mind, a clear head, and serene thoughts always acting the

mastership upon him. Such a man has something angelic in his very countenance; the life of such a man is one entire scene of composure; 't is an anticipation of the future state, which we well represent by an eternal peace.

To such a man to be angry, is only to be just to himself, and to act as he ought to do; to be troubled or sad is only to act his reason, for as to being in a passion he knows nothing of it; passion is a storm in the mind, and this never happens to him; for all excesses, either of grief or of resentment, are foreigners, and have no habitation with him. He is the only man that can observe that Scripture heavenly dictate, "be angry and sin not;" and if ever he is very angry, 't is with himself, for giving way to be angry with any one else.

This is the truly agreeable person, and the only one that can be called so in the world; his company is a charm, and is rather wondered at than imitated. 'T is almost a virtue to envy such a man; and one is apt innocently to grieve at him, when we see what is so desirable in him, and cannot either find it or make it in ourselves.

But take this with you in the character of this happy man, namely, that he is always a good man, a religious man. 'T is a gross error to imagine that a soul blackened with vice, loaded with crime, degenerated into immorality and folly, can be that man — can have this calm, serene soul, those clear thoughts, those constant smiles upon his brow, and the steady agreeableness and pleasantry in his temper, that I am speaking of; there must be intervals of darkness upon such a mind. Storms in the conscience will always lodge clouds upon the countenance, and where the weather is hazy within it can never be sunshine without; the smiles of a disturbed mind are all but feigned and forged; there may be

a good disposition, but it will be too often and too evidently interrupted by the recoils of the mind, to leave the temper untouched and the humour free and unconcerned; when the drum beats an alarm within, it is impossible but the disturbance will be discovered without.

Mark the man of crime; sit close to him in company; at the end of the most exuberant excursion of his mirth, you will never fail to hear his reflecting faculty whisper a sigh to him; he will shake it off, you will see him check it and go on. Perhaps he sings it off, but at the end of every song, nay, perhaps of every stanza, it returns; a kind of involuntary sadness breaks upon all his joy; he perceives it, rouses, despises it, and goes on; but in the middle of a long laugh in drops a sigh; it will be, it can be no otherwise; and I never conversed closely with a man of levity in my life but I could perceive it most plainly; 't is a kind of respiration natural to a stifled conviction — a hesitation that is the consequence of a captivated virtue, a little insurrection in the soul against the tyranny of profligate principles.

But in the good man the calm is complete — it is all nature, no counterfeit; he is always in humour, because he is always composed:

> He 's calm without, because he 's clear within.

A stated composure of mind can really proceed from nothing but a fund of virtue; and this is the reason why it is my opinion that the common saying, that content of mind is happiness, is a vulgar mistake, unless it be granted that this content is first founded on such a basis as the mind ought to be contented with, for otherwise a lunatic in Bedlam is a completely happy man; he sings in his hutch, and dances in his chain, and is as contented as any man living. The possession or power which that

vapour or delirium has upon his brain makes him fancy himself a prince, a monarch, a statesman, or just what he pleases to be; as a certain duchess is said to have believed herself to be an empress, has her footmen drawn up, with javelins, and dressed in antic habits, that she may see them through a window, and believe them to be her guards; is served upon the knee, called her majesty, imperial majesty, and the like; and with this splendour her distempered mind is deluded, forming ideas of things which are not, and at the same time her eyes are shut to the eternal captivity of her circumstances; in which she is made a property to other persons, her estate managed by guardianship, and she a poor demented creature to the last degree, an object of human compassion, and completely miserable.

The only contentment which entitles mankind to any felicity is that which is founded upon virtue and just principles, for contentment is nothing more or less than what we call peace; and what peace where crime possesses the mind, which is attended, as a natural consequence, with torment and disquiet? What peace where the harmony of the soul is broken by constant regret and self-reproaches? What peace in a mind under constant apprehensions and terrors of something yet attending to render them miserable; and all this is inseparable from a life of crime:

For where there 's guilt, there always will be fear.

Peace of mind makes a halcyon upon the countenance, it gilds the face with a cheerful aspect, such as nothing else can procure; and which indeed, as above, it is impossible effectually to counterfeit.

Bow, mighty reason, to thy Maker's name,
For God and Peace are just the same;
Heaven is the emanation of His face,
And want of peace makes hell in ev'ry place.

Tell us, ye men of notion, tell us why
You seek for bliss and wild prosperity
In storms and tempests, feuds and war —
Is happiness to be expected there?
Tell us what sort of happiness
Can men in want of peace possess?

Blest charm of Peace, how sweet are all those hours
We spend in thy society!
Afflictions lose their acid powers,
And turn to joys when join'd to thee.

The darkest article of life with peace
Is but the gate of happiness;
Death in his blackest shapes can never fright,
Thou can'st see day beyond his night;
The smile of Peace can calm the frown of Fate,
And, spite of death, can life anticipate,
Nay, hell itself, could it admit of peace,
Would change its nature, and its name would cease;
The bright transforming blessing would destroy
The life of death, and damn the place to joy;
The metamorphosis would be so strange,
'T would fright the devils, and make them bless the change;
Or else the brightness would be so intense
They 'd shun the light, and fly from thence.

Let heav'n, that unknown happiness,
Be what it will, 't is best described by peace.
No storms without, or storms within;
No fear, no danger there, because no sin:
'T is bright essential happiness,
Because He dwells within whose name is Peace.

Who would not sacrifice for thee
All that men call felicity?
Since happiness is but an empty name,
A vapour without heat or flame,
But what from thy original derives —
And dies with thee, by whom it lives.

But I return to the subject of conversation, from which this digression is made only to show that the fund of agreeable conversation is, and can only be, founded in virtue; this alone is the thing that keeps a man always in humour, and always agreeable.

They mistake much who think religion or a strict morality discomposes the temper, sours the mind, and unfits a man for conversation. 'T is irrational to think a man can't be bright unless he is wicked; it may as well be said a man cannot be merry till he is mad, not agreeable till he is offensive, not in humour till he is out of himself. 'T is clear to me no man can be truly merry but he that is truly virtuous; wit is as consistent with religion as religion is with good manners; nor is there anything in the limitations of virtue and religion, I mean the just restraints which religion and virtue lay upon us in conversation, that should abate the pleasure of it; on the contrary, they increase it. For example: restraints from vicious and indecent discourses; there 's as little manners in those things as there is mirth in them, nor indeed does religion or virtue rob conversation of one grain of true mirth. On the contrary, the religious man is the only man fully qualified for mirth and good humour, with this advantage, that when the vicious and the virtuous man appears gay and merry, but differ, as they must do, in the subject of their mirth, you may always observe the virtuous man's mirth is superior to the other, more suitable to him as a man, as a gentleman, as a wise man, and as a good man; and, generally speaking, the other will acknowledge it, at least afterward, when his thoughts cool, and as his reflections come in.

But what shall we do to correct the vices of conversation? How shall we show men the picture of their own behaviour? There is not a greater undertaking in the world, or an attempt of more consequence to the good of mankind, than this; but 't is as difficult also as it is useful, and at best I shall make but a little progress in it in this work: let others mend it.

OF UNFITTING OURSELVES FOR CONVERSATION

Before I enter upon the thing which I call the immorality of conversation, let me say a little about the many weak and foolish ways by which men strive, as it were, to unfit themselves for conversation. Human infirmities furnish us with several things that help to make us unconversable; we need not study to increase the disadvantages we lie under on that score. Vice and intemperance, not as a crime only, that I should speak of by itself, but even as a distemper, unfit us for conversation; they help to make us cynical, morose, surly, and rude. Vicious people boast of their polite carriage and their nice behaviour, how gay, how good-humoured, how agreeable! For a while it may be so; but trace them as men of vice, follow them till they come to years, and observe, while you live, you never see the humour last, but they grow fiery, morose, positive, and petulant. An ancient drunkard is a thing indeed not often seen, because the vice has one good faculty with it, viz., that it seldom hands them on to old age; but an ancient and good-humoured drunkard I think I never knew.

It seems strange that men should affect unfitting themselves for society, and study to make themselves unconversable, whereas their being truly sociable as men is the thing which would most recommend them, and that to the best of men, and best answers to the highest felicity of life. Let no man value himself upon being morose and cynical, sour and unconversable — 't is the reverse of a good man; a truly religious man follows the rule of the apostle — "Be affable, be courteous, be humble; in meekness esteeming every man better than ourselves;" whereas conversation now is the reverse of the Christian

rule; 't is interrupted with conceitedness and affectation — a pride, esteeming ourselves better than every man; and that which is worse still, this happens generally when indeed the justice of the case is against us, for where is the man who, thus overruling himself, is not evidently inferior in merit to all about him? Nay, and frequently those who put most value upon themselves, have the least merit to support it. Self-conceit is the bane of human society, and, generally speaking, is the peculiar of those who have the least to recommend them: 't is the ruin of conversation, and the destruction of all improvement; for how should any man receive any advantage from the conversation of others, who believes himself qualified to teach them, and not to have occasion to learn anything from them?

Nay, as the fool is generally the man that is conceited most of his own wit, so that very conceit is the ruin of him; it confirms him a fool all the days of his life, for he that thinks himself a wise man is a fool, and knows it not; nay, 't is impossible he should continue to be a fool if he was but once convinced of his folly:

> If fools could their own ignorance discern,
> They 'd be no longer fools, because they 'd learn.

It will be objected here, indeed, that folly and conceit may be hurtful to conversation, may rob men of the advantage of it, unfit one side for conversing, and make it unprofitable, as well as unpleasant to the other; but that this is nothing to the immorality of conversation; that ignorance and conceit may be an infirmity, but is not always a crime; that the mischief of men's being fools is generally their own, but the mischief of their being knaves is to other people; and this is very true. But certainly egregious folly merits one paragraph of re-

buke; perhaps it may touch the senses of some weak brethren one time or other, and the labour may not be lost.

I never saw a more simple, or yet a more furious irreconcilable quarrel, than once between two of the most empty, conceited people that ever I knew in the world; and it was upon one calling the other fool, which, on both sides, was unhappily very true. They fought upon the spot, but were parted by the company; they challenged, and could not meet, their friends getting notice of it; in short, it ruined them both; they made new appointments, and at last deceived their friends and fought again; they were both wounded, and one died; the other fled the country, and never returned. The first owned he was a fool, which was indeed some diminution of his folly. I say he knew himself to be a fool, but could not bear the other to tell him so, who was more a fool than himself. The other boldly asserted his own capacities to be infinitely greater than they were, and despised the first to the last degree, who indeed, if he had not more wit, had more modesty than the other; but both, like fools, fought about nothing, for such, indeed, the question about their wit might very well have been called.

But it is true, after all, the want of a conversable temper, if from a want or defect of sense, may be an infirmity, not an immorality; that is to say, the cause is not so in itself, but it may be so in its consequences that way also, for the conversation of fools is vanity in the abstract. I might here, indeed, find subject for a large tract upon the infinite diversity of fools, and by consequence the wondrous beauty of their conversation. I have on this occasion reckoned up a list of about seven and thirty several sorts of fools, besides Solomon's fool, whom I take to be the wicked fool only; these I have diversified by their tempers and

humours, and in the infinite variety of their follies of several sorts, in every one of which they rob themselves, and all that keep them company, of the felicity of conversation, there being nothing in them but emptiness, or a fulness of what is ridiculous, and only qualified to be laughed at or found fault with.

I have likewise described some of their conversation, their vain repetitions, their catchwords, their laughings and gestures, and adapted them to make the world merry. I have thoughts of running it on into foreign characters, and describe French, Spanish, Portuguese fools, and fools of Russia, China, and the East Indies; but as this is something remote from the design in hand, which is more serious, and done on a much better view, and likewise of an unmeasurable length, like the weighty subject it is upon (for folly is a large field), so I refer it to another opportunity.

The truth is, that part of conversation which I am now to speak of, or which I mean by what I have said upon this subject, is the weighty and serious part, and is not the mere common talk, or a conversation which fools are capable of; 't is exercised in a solid and well-tempered frame, and when regulated, as it ought to be, by virtue and good morals, is qualified to make mankind happy in the enjoyment of the best things and of the best company; and therefore the evils that creep into and corrupt this part of our conversation are of the more fatal quality, and worth our exposing, that people may see and shun them, and that conversation may be restored among us to what it should be.

I. *Of the Immorality of Conversation in General.*

Some may object against the term, the immorality of conversation, and think the word improper

to the subject; but to save any critic the dearly beloved labour of cavilling in favour of ill manners and unbecoming behaviour, I shall explain myself before I go any farther.

I call conversation immoral where the discourse is indecent, where 't is irreligious or profane, where 't is immodest or scandalous, or where 't is slanderous and abusive. In these and such cases, *loqui est agere;* thus talking lewdly, or talking profanely, is an immodest action. Such is the power of words, that mankind is able to act as much evil by their tongues as by their hands; the ideas that are formed in the mind from what we hear are most piercing and permanent, and the force of example in this case is not more powerful than the force of argument.

Some of the worst sins are not to be committed but by the tongue, as the sin of blasphemy, speaking treason against the majesty of God, cursings and imprecations among men, lies, slanders, and a vast variety of petty excursions, which are grown modish by custom, and seem too small to be reproved.

We are here in England, after many years' degeneracy, arrived to a time wherein vice is in general discountenanced by authority; God in mercy to the age has inspired our government with a resolution to discourage it; the king, now his wars are over, and his foreign enemies allow him some rest, will, we hope, declare war against this domestic enemy.

The late Queen Mary, of heavenly memory for her piety and blessed example, appeared in her time gallantly in the cause of virtue; magistrates were encouraged to punish vice, new laws made to restrain it, and justice seemed to be at work to reclaim it. But what can kings, or queens, or parliaments do? Laws and proclamations are weak and useless things, unless some secret influence can affect the practices of those whom no laws can reach.

To make laws against words would be as fruitless as to make a shelter against the lightning. There are so many inlets to the breach that the informers would be as numerous as the criminals, and the trespass as frequent as the minutes we live in.

Conversation has received a general taint, and the disease is become a charm. The way to cure it is not by forcible restraints on particulars, but by some general influence on the public practice. When a distemper becomes pleasant to a patient he is the harder to be cured; he has a sort of aversion to the remedy because he has none to the disease. Our modern people have such a passion for the mode, that if it be but the fashion to be lewd, they will scandalise their honour, debauch their bodies, and damn their souls to be genteel. If the beaux talk blasphemy, the rest will set up for atheists, and deny their Maker, to be counted witty in the defence of it; when our tradesmen would be thought wise, and make themselves appear nice and learned in their conversation, nothing will satisfy them but to criticise upon things sacred, run up to discuss the inscrutables of religion, search the arcana even of heaven itself. The divinity of the Son of God, the hypostatic union, the rational description of the state everlasting, nay, the demonstrations of undemonstrable things, are the common subject of their fancied affected capacities.

Hence come heresies and delusions. Men affecting to search into what is impossible they should clearly discover, learn to doubt because they cannot describe, and deny the existence because they cannot explain the manner of what they inquire after; as if a thorough impossibility of their acting by their sense upon objects beyond its reach was an evidence against their being. Thus, because the Trinity cannot appear to their reasoning, they oppose their

reasoning to its reality; they will divest the Son of God of His divinity, and of the hypostatic union of the Godhead in the person of Christ, because they cannot distinguish between the actions done by Him in His mediatorial capacity, in virtue of His office, and those actions which He did in virtue of His omnipotence and Godhead.

This is not an immorality and error in conversation only, or not so much so as I think it is a judgment upon it, a blast from Heaven upon the arrogance of the tongue. When proud men give themselves a loose to talk blasphemously to be thought witty, their Maker gives them up to suggest damnable errors till they begin to believe them, and to broach their own wicked hints, till they by custom learn to espouse and defend them, as children tell feigned stories till they believe them to be true. If our town fopperies were visible only in the little excursions of dress and behaviour, it would be satisfaction enough for a wise man either to pity or laugh at them; but when wit is set on work, and invention racked to find out methods how they may be more than superlatively wicked, when all the endowments of the mind and helps of art, with the accomplishments of education, are ranged in battle against Heaven, and joined in confederacy to make mankind more wicked than ever the devil had the impudence to desire of them, this calls out aloud for the help of all the powers of government, and all the strength of wit and virtue, to detect and expose it.

Indeed I had some thoughts to leave upon record a melancholy kind of genealogy of this horrid perfection of vice, which so increases in our age, I mean as it respects this nation, in which 't is too ancient, indeed, to trace it back to its original; yet since its visible increase has been within the reach of our own

memory, and it is, as I may say, the adopted child of our age, we may judge of the extent of its influence, and may take a short view of it in miniature. None, indeed, can judge of the extent of its influence but such as have conversed with all sorts of people, from the court to the plough-tail, where you may too sadly see the effect of it in the general debauching both the principles and practice of all sorts and degrees of this nation; but it will be an ungrateful task; it would lead me to the characters of persons, and to write satires upon the times, as well those past as those present, which, indeed, is not my business in this work, and therefore I throw by some keen observations which I had made upon this subject, my business here, or at least my design, being rather to instruct the age than to reproach it; and as for the dead, they are gone to their place.

St. Augustine observes, *De civitate Dei*, that the ancients justified their liberty in all excesses of vice which they practised in those times from the patterns of their gods; that the stories of the rapes and incest of Jupiter, the lewdness of Venus and Mars, and the like, made those crimes appear less heinous, since people had them frequently in the histories of the deities they worshipped, and that they must of necessity be lawful, seeing they were practised by those famous persons whom they had placed above the skies, and thought fit to adore.

If modern times have received unhappy impressions from vicious courts, and princes have not taken the needful caution not to guide to evil by their example, instead of turning this into satire upon those that are past, I choose to give it another turn, which our kings, and people too, in time to come may make good use of, and I hope will not be offended at supposing that they will do so.

1. To kings or sovereigns in future reigns; for I am not in this intending the present reign: It may without offence be said, that they have a glorious advantage put into their hands to honour their Maker, and advantage their people, to the immortal glory of their own memory, by prompting virtue and discouraging vice by their happy examples; by removing the vicious habits of conversation from the court-modes, and making vice unfashionable as it is unseemly. Why may not the royal example go as far to reform a nation as it has formerly done to debauch and ruin it? But as this respects the heads[1] of the people, I desire to speak it with the deference of a subject, and close this discourse with only saying, that I pray and wish it may be so.
2. To the people, with more freedom, I apply it thus: Let past examples be what they will, the present reign encourages no crime; why then should our modern conversation receive this taint? Why should we be volunteers in the devil's service while the power we are under gives us neither precept or example? If we are guilty, 't is by mere choice; the crime is all our own, and we are patterns to ourselves.

II. *Of Reforming the Errors of Conversation.*

But I leave this part as less grateful, and perhaps not more significant than what I have yet to say upon this subject; 't is not so absolutely material to inquire how his conversation came first to be corrupted, as how it shall be reformed or recovered. The question before us is, by what method to retrieve this miserable defection, and to bring back the nation to some tolerable degree of good manners,

[1] This was all written in King William's reign, and refers to that time. [Defoe.]

that morality at least may regain its authority, and virtue and sobriety be valued again as it ought to be. This, I say, is a difficult thing to direct.

——— Facilis descensus Averno :
Sed revocare gradum, . . .
Hoc opus, hic labor est. — Virg. *Æneid*, vi.

Englished thus :

It is easy into hell to fall,
But to get back from thence is all.

The method might be easier prescribed than practised, though it cannot be perfectly prescribed neither. Something may, however, be said by way of observation ; perhaps other well-wishers may hereafter throw their mites into this treasury, and some zealous reformers may at last make the attempt upon these foundations.

1. A strict execution of the laws against vice. We have already and are every day making very good laws to reform the people ; but the benefit of laws consists in the executive power, which if not vigorously put forth, laws become useless, and it were better they were not made at all. I was once going to have added here a treatise, intituled, " An Essay upon the Insignificancy of Laws and Acts of Parliament in England ;" but upon second thoughts, resolving to mingle no satire with my serious observations, I omitted this also. The deficiency of our laws is chiefly in the want of laws to reform the lawmakers, that the wheel of executive justice might be kept going. Of what use else can laws be ?

2. An exemplary behaviour in our gentry, after whose copy the poor people generally write ; not but that I acknowledge it will be harder to reform a nation than it would be to debauch it, though virtue should obtain upon custom, and become the fashion,

because inclination does not stand neuter; but it would be a great step to this reformation if we could all join to discourage immorality by example. That if a man will be drunk or lewd, he shall, as a thief robs a house, do it in the dark, and be ashamed of it. If these two heads were brought to pass, I question not but reformation would come to such an height, that if a poor man happened to be drunk he should come and desire the constable to set him in the stocks for fear of a worse punishment; and if a rich man swore an oath in his passion, he should send his footman to the next justice of the peace with his fine and get a discharge for fear of being informed against and exposed.

In order to the furthering this great work it would be very necessary, if possible, to draw the picture of our modern vices, to let mankind see by a true light what they are doing, and how ugly a phiz the mistress they court really appears with when inclination, which paints her in different colours, is taken off.

It will be impossible to bring vice out of fashion if we cannot bring men to an understanding of what it really is; but could we prevail upon a man to examine his vice, to dissect its parts, and view the anatomy of it; to see how disagreeable it is to him as a man, as a gentleman, or as a Christian; how despicable and contemptible in its highest fruition; how destructive to his senses, estate, and reputation; how dishonourable, and how beastly, in its public appearances: such a man would certainly be out of love with it; and be but mankind once out of love with vice, the reformation is half brought to pass.

I shall not pretend to invade the province of the learned, nor offer one argument from Scripture or Providence; for I am supposed to be talking to men that doubt or deny them both. Divinity is not my

talent, nor ever like to be my profession; the charge of priestcraft and schoolmen would not lie against me; besides, it is not the way of talking that the world relishes at this time; in a word, talking Scripture is out of fashion. But I must crave leave to tell my reader that if there were no God or Providence, devil or future state, yet they ought not to be drunken and lewd, passionate, revengeful, or immoral; 't is so unnatural, so unruly, so ungenteel, so foolish and foppish, that no wise man, as a man, can justify it so much as to his own reason or the memory of his ancestors. I suppose myself talking to men that have nothing to do with God, and desire He should have nothing to do with them; and yet even to such a vicious conversation, looked on without the gust of inclination, would appear too brutish to be meddled with, if we will but choose like men, not to say like Christians. Virtue and morality is more agreeable to human nature, more manly than vice and intemperance; 't is more suitable to all the ends of life, to the being of society, to the public peace of families, as well as nations. Mankind would rather be virtuous than vicious, if they were to choose only for their own ease and convenience. Vice tends to oppression, war, and confusion; virtue is peaceable and honest; vice is a poison to society; no man is safe if men have neither sobriety nor honesty, for the innocent will be robbed by the thief, ravished by the lewd, and murdered by the drunkard.

It might not be a needless digression if I should examine here whether whoring and drunkenness be not the two mother sins of the times, the spring and original of all our fashionable vices. I distinguish this because other sins, as murders, thefts, rapes, and the like, are now come so much in vogue, we are content the laws should be executed for them, but

should think it very hard a man should be hanged for whoring or transported for being drunk.

I would not have any of our gentlemen think that my laying the charge of our debauchery on the examples of the gods, has taken off anything of the blame from those who have industriously propagated the spreading evil among their tenants and neighbours, by their own vicious example; and I could turn the whole observation into a satire on the manners of our gentlemen, and describe with what easiness our magistrates let fall the reins of their authority, and connive at the practice of all manner of intemperance and excess among the people; with what eagerness the poor countrymen are called in to be made drunk upon every occasion; with what contempt any person is looked upon either in town or country, that either will not be drunk, or cannot bear an excessive quantity of wine; how our common mirth is filled with songs and poems, recommending drunkenness and lewdness; and rampant vice rides riot through the nation. But, as above, I avoid satire; I shall endeavour to treat this foul subject in as civil terms as the case will bear, and only examine general conversation in particular heads, with some vulgar errors of behaviour which are crept in, and which seem authorised by custom.

III. *Of Atheistical and Profane Discourse.*

God Almighty Himself is the least beholding to this age of any that ever was from the beginning of time; for that being arrived to a degree of knowledge superior to all that went before us, or at least fancying it to be so, whereby the greater glory might accrue to Himself, the Author of all wisdom, that every gift, the brightest of all the heavenly blessings, is made use of to put the greatest con-

tempt upon His majesty that mankind is capable of — to deny His essence; such an affront that the devils themselves never had the impudence to suggest to the world till they found man arrived to a degree of hardness fit for something never done before. All the heathen nations in the world came short of this; the most refined philosophers owned a first cause of all things, and that something was superior, whose influence governed, and whose being was sacred and to be adored. The devil himself, who is allowed to be full of enmity against the Supreme Being, has often set up himself to be worshipped as a God, but never prompted the most barbarous nations to deny the being of a God; and 't is thought that even the devil himself believed the notion was too absurd to be imposed upon the world. But our age is even with him for his folly, for since they cannot get him to join in the denial of a God they will deny his devilship too, and have neither one nor other.

'T is worth observation, after the most convincing arguments that nature and reason can produce for the existence of a deity, what weak, foolish, ridiculous shifts the most refined of our atheistical disputants fly to in defence of their notion, with what senseless pains they labour to reason themselves into an opinion which their own constitution, nature, and way of living give the lie to every moment; with how little consistency they solve all the other phenomena of nature and creation; that when in all other points they are capable of arguing strenuously, and are not to be satisfied but with strength of reason and sound argument, here they admit sophisms, delusive suppositions, and miserable shams and pretences to prevail upon their own judgments. This is touched at in the following lines upon the system of Prometheus, which I could not omit upon this occasion, relating

to the heathens' ignorance in the great doctrine of first causes:

> The great Promethean artist, poets say,
> First made the model of a man in clay,
> Contrived the form of parts, and when he had done,
> Stole vital heat from the prolific sun;
> But not a poet tells us to this day
> Who made Prometheus first, and who the clay,
> Who gave the great prolific to the sun,
> And where the first productive work begun.

Also Epicurus, his philosophy will satisfy some people, who fancy the world was made by a strange fortuitous conjunction of atoms, without any pre-existent influence, or without any immediate power, which Mr. Creech very well translates thus:

> But some have dreamt of atoms strangely hurled
> Into the decent order of the world,
> And so by chance combined, from whence began
> The earth, the heaven, the sea, and beast, and man.

To which I crave leave to subjoin one complement, by way of confutation of this folly:

> Forgetting first that something must bestow
> Existence on those atoms that did so.

The arguments for the existence of a deity are so many, so nicely handled, and so unanswerable, that 't is needless to attempt anything that way; no man in his wits needs any further demonstration of it than what he may find within himself, nor is it any part of the work I am upon; I have only a few things to ask of our modern atheists.

1. Whether their more serious thoughts do not reflect upon them in the very act, and give the lie to their arguments. My Lord Rochester, who was arrived to an extraordinary pitch in this infernal learning, acknowledged it on his deathbed; the sense

nature has upon her of the certainty of this great truth, will give some convulsions at so horrid an act.

> Nature pays homage with a trembling bow,
> And conscious men but faintly disallow;
> The secret trepidation racks the soul,
> And while he says, no God, replies, "Thou fool."

2. I would ask the most confident atheist, what assurance he has of the negative, and what a risk he runs if he should be mistaken? This we are sure of, if we want demonstration to prove the being of a God, they are much more at a loss for a demonstration to prove the negative. Now, no man can answer it to his prudence, to take the risk they run, upon an uncertain supposititious notion; for if there be such a thing as a First Cause, which we call God, they have very little reason to expect much from Him who have made it their business to affront Him by denying His existence. Nor have they acted in their denial like wise men, for they have not used so much as the caution of good manners; but as if they were as sure of His nonentity as of the strongest demonstration, they have been witty upon the thing, and made a jest of the supposition, turned all matters of faith into ridicule, burlesqued upon religion itself, and made ballads and songs on the Bible. Thus Rochester has left us a long lewd song, beginning thus:

> Religion's a politic cheat,
> Made up of many a fable;
> Ne'er trouble the wise or the great,
> But only amuses the rabble.

Now, I am not in this discourse entering into any of the arguments in these grand questions on one side or other — that would be to make this work a collection of polemics; nor am I casuist enough for

such a work — but I am observing or remarking upon the wickedness of the treating these subjects with levity and ignorance in the common road of conversation.

Methinks these gentlemen act with more courage than discretion; for if it should happen at last that there should be a God, and that He has the power of rewards and punishments in His hand, as He must have or cease to be almighty, they are but in an ill case:

> If it should so fall out, as who can tell,
> But there may be a God, a heaven, a hell,
> Mankind had best consider well for fear,
> 'T should be too late when their mistakes appear.

Nor do they, in my opinion, discover any great wit in it; there is, if I might pass for a judge, something flat, something that shocks the fancy, in all the satire upon religion that ever I saw; as if the muse were not so much an atheist as the poet, but baulks the hint, and could not favour a blasphemous flight with so much freedom and spirit that at other times it has shown; which is a notice that there is a tacit sense of the Deity, though they pretend to deny it, lodged in the understanding; that it is not stifled without some difficulty, and struggles hard with the fancy, when the party strives to be more than ordinarily insolent with his Maker.

In the next place, as 't is one of the worst immoralities of conversation when it is profane, so blasphemy is the extreme of profaneness; you cannot come into company with an atheist but you have it in his common discourse; he is always putting some banter or foolish pun upon religion, affronting the invisible Power, or ridiculing his Maker; all his wit runs out into it, as all diseases run into the plague in a time of infection, and you must have patience to hear it or quarrel with him.

Below these we have a sort of people who will acknowledge a God, but he must be such a one as they please to make him; a fine, well-bred, good-natured, gentleman-like deity, that cannot have the heart to damn any of his creatures to an eternal punishment, nor could not be so weak as to let the Jews crucify his own son. These men expose religion, and all the doctrines of repentance, and faith in Christ, with all the means of a Christian salvation, as matter of banter and ridicule. The Bible, they say, is a good history in most parts, but the story of our Saviour they look upon as a mere novel, and the miracles of the New Testament as a legend of priestcraft.

Further, besides these, we have Arians and Socinians, the disciples of an ancient heretic who went out of the church always at the singing the *Gloria Patri*, that he might be out of the noise, and would sit down at the doxology of the prayers, to note his disowning the godhead of Jesus Christ.

These are iniquities, as Job said, should be punished by the judges (chap. xxii. ver. 20), and these are the things which have given such a stroke to the ruin of the nation's morals; for no method can be so direct to prepare people for all sorts of wickedness as to persuade them out of a belief of any Supreme Power to restrain them. Make a man once cease to believe a God, and he has nothing left to limit his appetite but mere philosophy; if there is no supreme judicature, he must be his own judge and his own law, and will be so; the notion of hell, devil, and infernal spirits are empty things, and have nothing of terror in them, if the belief of a Power superior to them be obliterated.

But to bring this particular case nearer to the point of conversation, the errors of which lie before me: though we live in an age where these horrid

degrees of impiety are too much practised, yet we live in a place where religion is professed, the name of God owned and worshipped, religion and the doctrines of Christianity established; and as it is so, it ought as much to be preserved by the civil power from the horrid invasion of atheists, deists, and heretics, as the public peace ought to be defended against freebooters, thieves, and invaders.

'Tis very improbable any reformation of manners should be brought to pass, if the debauching the religious principles of the nation goes on with an unrestrained liberty. How incongruous is it to the decoration [1] of government, that a man shall be punished for drunkenness and set in the stocks for swearing, but shall have liberty to deny the God of heaven and dispute against the very sum and substance of the Christian doctrine, shall banter the Scripture and make ballads of the Pentateuch, turn all the principles of religion — the salvation of the soul, the death of our Saviour, and the revelation of the Gospel — into ridicule. And shall we pretend to reformation of manners and suppressing immoralities, while such as this is the general mixture of conversation? If a man talk against the government, or speak scurrilously of the king, he is had to the Old Bailey, and from thence to the pillory or whipping-post, and it is fit it should be so; but he may speak treason against the Majesty of heaven, deny the godhead of His Redeemer, and make a jest of the Holy Ghost — and thus affront the Power we all adore — and yet pass with impunity. Perhaps some in the company may have courage enough to blame him, and vindicate their religion with a "Why do you talk so?" but where is the man or the magistrate that ever vindicated the honour of his Maker

[1] Perhaps this is a misprint for "declaration."

with a resentment becoming the crime? If a man give the lie to a gentleman in company he takes it as an affront, flies into a passion, quarrels, fights, and perhaps murders him; nay, some have done it for an absent friend whom they have heard abused; but where is the gentleman that ever thought himself so much concerned in the quarrel of his Maker but that he could hear Him affronted, His being denied, the lie given to His divine authority, nay, to His divine being, and all His commands ridiculed and exposed, without any motion of spirit to punish the insolence of the party, and without drawing his sword in the quarrel, or letting him know he does not like it?

Methinks I need not make an apology for this, as if I meant that quarrelling and fighting were a proper practice in the case; the law does not admit it in any case, nor is it reasonable it should; and God Almighty is far from desiring us to run any risk in His service. But I choose to bring the cases into a parallel, to signify that I think it is a vulgar error in our behaviour not to show our resentment when we hear the honour and essence of God slighted and denied, His majesty abused, and religion bantered and ridiculed in common discourses. I think it would be very reasonable to tell a gentleman he wants manners when he talks reproachfully of his Maker, and to use him scurvily if he resented it. It would very well become a man of quality to cane a lewd fop, or kick him downstairs, when his insolence took a loose at religion in his company, else men may be bullied out of their Christianity and lampooned into profaneness, for fear of being counted fools.

Besides, it is in this as in all other like cases; he that will talk atheistically in my company, either believes me to be an atheist like himself, or ventures

to impose upon me; and by imposing upon me, either accounts me a fool that cannot tell when I am put upon, or a coward that dare not resent it.

Upon which account, even in good manners, it ought to be avoided; for it cannot be introduced into any part of conversation where the company are not all alike, without the greatest affront upon the rest that can be offered them.

IV. *Of Lewd and Immodest Discourse.*

Talking bawdy, that sodomy of the tongue, has the most of ill manners and the least of a gentleman in it of any part of common discourse. Sir George Mackenzie has very handsomely exposed it in its proper colours; but it may not be an intrenchment at all upon his province to say something to it in these observations.

This part is the peculiar practice of such persons as are hardened to a degree beyond other men, proficients in debauchery, whose lives are so continually devoted to lewdness, that their mouths cannot contain it; who can govern their tongues no better than their tails, and are willing to be thought what really they are. In these it is neither so strange nor so much a crime as in others; these are persons not to be reclaimed. This part of my observation is not designed for their use; they are not to be talked out of their vice; they must go on and run their length. Nothing but a gaol or an hospital ever brings them to a reformation; they repent sometimes in that emblem of hell, a fluxing house, and, under the surgeon's hands, wish a little they had been wiser; but they follow one sin with another, till their carcass stinks as bad as their discourse, and the body becomes too nasty for the soul to stay any longer in it. From these no discourse is to be expected but what is

agreeable to the tenor of their lives; for then to talk otherwise would be strained and eccentric, and become them as little as it would be tedious to them; but for a gentleman, a man of seeming modesty and a man of behaviour, not arrived to that class in the devil's school, for such a one to mix his discourse with lewd and filthy expressions, has something in it of a figure which intends more than is expressed.

Either we must believe such a one to be very lewd in his practice, or else, that not being able yet to arrive to such a degree of wickedness as he desires, he would supply that defect with a cheat, and persuade you to believe he is really worse than he is.

Which of these two characters I would choose to wear I cannot tell, for he that desires to be worse than he thinks he is, is certainly as bad as he desires to be; and he that is so bad as to let fly the excrescences of it at his mouth, is as wicked as the devil can in reason desire of him.

But I descend from the wickedness to the indecency of the matter; its being a sin against God is not so much the present argument as its being unmannerly — a sin against breeding and society, a breach of behaviour, and a saucy, insolent affront to all the company.

I do not deny but that modesty, as it respects the covering our bodies, was at first an effect of the fall of our parents into crime, and is therefore said still to be the consequences of criminal nature, and no virtue in itself, because no part of the body had been unfit to be exposed if vice had not made the distinction necessary.

But from this very argument lewd discourse appears to be a sin against custom and decency; for why must the tongue industriously expose things and actions at which Nature blushes, and which

custom, let the original be what it will, has dedicated to privacy and retirement? What if it be true that shame is the consequence of sin, and that modesty is not an original virtue; it cannot but be allowed that sin has thereby brought us to a necessity of making modesty be a virtue, and sin would have a double influence upon us if, after it had made us ashamed, it should make us not ashamed again.

'T is, in my opinion, a mistake when we say sin was the immediate cause of shame; 't was sin indeed gave a nudity to our natures and actions; the innocence, which served as a glory and covering, being gone, then shame came in as the effect of the conscious sinner; so the text says, they knew that they were naked. Shame was the effect of nakedness, as nakedness was the effect of sin.

From hence, then, I argue, and this is the reason of my naming it, that to be ashamed of our nakedness is a token of our wisdom and a monument of our just sense of the first sin that made it so, and as much a duty now as any other part of our repentance.

To give the tongue then a liberty in that which there is so much reason to blush at, argues no sense of the original degeneracy. Where is the man that partakes not of Adam's fall, has no vicious contracted habit and nature conveyed to him from his grand predecessor? Let him come forth, let him go naked and live by himself, and let his posterity partake of his innocence; his tongue cannot offend, nothing can be indecent for him to say, nothing uncomely for him to see.

But if these gentlemen think it proper to cover their nakedness with their clothes, methinks they should not be always uncovering it again with their tongues; if there are some needful things which Nature requires to be done in secret, and which they

by inclination choose to act in private, what reason can they give for speaking of them in public?

There is a strange incongruity in the behaviour of these people, that they fill their mouths with the foul repetition of actions and things which their own practising in private condemns them for, nay, which they would be ashamed to do in public; such men ought to act the common requirements of Nature in the most publickest places of the streets, bring their wives or whores to the exchange and to the market-places, and lie with them in the street, or else hold their tongues, and let their mouths have no more the stench of their vices in public than their actions.

And why, of all the rest of the parts of life, must the tongue take a peculiar licence to revel thus upon Nature, as if she had a mind to reproach her with the infirmities she labours under? The customs we are obliged to, though they are clogs upon Nature and a badge of original defection, yet neither is there anything so odious or so burdensome that these gentlemen should triumph over the nurse that brought them up.

Take the lewdest and most vicious wretch that ever gave his tongue a loose in this hateful practice, and turn him about to his mother, you shall hardly prevail upon him to talk his lewd language to her; there is something nauseous and surfeiting in that thought. This talking bawdy is like a man going to debauch his own mother; for it is raking into the arcana and exposing the nakedness of Nature, the common mother of us all.

If, as a famous man of wit pretended, lying with a woman was the homeliest thing that man can do, 't is much more true that talking of it is the homeliest thing that man can say.

Nor is there to me any jest in these things, any

appearance of mirth. There may be some pleasure in wicked actions, as the world rates pleasure, but I must profess 't is dull, and for want of other more regular tastes that there should be pleasure in the discourse. 'T is a profaning of Nature, and bringing forth those things she has hallowed to secrecy and retirement to the scandalous indecency of public banter and jest.

But men, who have always something to say for their folly, tell us 't is custom only which has made any of these things uncommon, and there 's no sin in speaking that which there was no sin in doing.

Let us grant them that custom only has done this; but if custom has made these things uncommon, and concealed, or, at least, banished them from the voice of conversation, 't is a sin then against custom to expose them again. Lawful customs become allowed virtues, and ought to be preserved. Custom is a good reason in such concealments; if custom has locked them up, let them remain so, at least, till you can give a better reason for calling them abroad again than custom has given for restraining them. Custom has made these things uncommon, because that sin which first made Nature naked left her so captivated by some of her parts more than others, that she could not but blush at those where sin had taken up its peculiar residence. Now, as I noted before, no man can with any tolerable satisfaction expose the parts till he has first extracted and separated the sin which, having possessed them, covered them at first with shame. He that can do this may go naked and talk anything.

And, for the same reason, no man can justify talking lewdly but he that at the same time throws away his clothes, for to cover himself with his hands and uncover himself with his tongue are contradictions in their own nature, and one condemns the other.

He that scorns the decency of words should also scorn the decency of clothes, let his body be as bald as his discourse, and let him scorn the shame of one as well as the shame of the other.

It is no sin, they say, to talk of what it is no sin to do; and, I may add, it is no sin at all to show what it is no sin to describe. Why is the eye to be less offended than the ear, since both are but the common organs of the understanding?

But the weather and inconveniences of the climate are urged for clothing our bodies, and I urge decency and good manners for the government of our tongues; and let any one contend it with me that thinks he can prove that the obligation of the first is greater than the obligation of the last.

Much more might be said to this, but I make but an essay, and am unwilling to run out into a long discourse.

OF TALKING FALSELY

By talking falsely, I do not design to enter upon a long dissertation upon the sin of lying in general. I suppose all men that read me will acknowledge lying to be one of the most scandalous sins between man and man, a crime of a deep dye, and of an extensive nature, leading into innumerable sins, that is, as lying is practised to deceive, to injure, betray, rob, destroy, and the like. Lying in this sense, is the concealing of all other crimes; it is the sheep's clothing hung upon the wolf's back, it is the Pharisee's prayer, the whore's blush, the hypocrite's paint, the murderer's smile, the thief's cloak; 't is Joab's embrace and Judas's kiss; in a word, it is mankind's darling sin and the devil's distinguishing character.

But this is not the case I am upon, this is not the talking falsely I am upon, but a strange liberty which (particularly in conversation) people take to talk

falsely, without charging themselves with any offence in it either against God or man. This is to be considered in two or three parts, not but that it has many more.

1. The liberty of telling stories, a common vice in discourse. The main end of this extraordinary part of tittle-tattle is to divert the company and make them laugh; but we ought to consider whether that very empty satisfaction, either to ourselves or friends, is to be purchased at so great an expense as that of conscience and of a dishonour done to truth.

'T is scarce fit to say how far some people go in this folly, to call it no worse, even till sometimes they bring the general credit of their conversation into decay, and people that are used to them learn to lay no stress upon anything they say.

For once, we will suppose a story to be in its substance true, yet to what monstrous a bulk doth it grow by that frequent addition put to it in the relation, till not only it comes to be improbable, but even impossible to be true; and the ignorant relater is so tickled with having made a good story of it, whatever it was when he found it, that he is blind to the absurdities and inconsistencies of fact in relation, and tells it with a full face even to those that are able to confute it by proving it to be impossible.

I once heard a man, who would have taken it very ill to be thought a liar, tell a story, the facts of which were impossible to be true, and yet assert it with so much assurance, and declare so positively that he had been an eye-witness of it himself, that there was nothing to do but, in respect to the man, let him alone and say nothing. A gentleman who sat by, and whose good breeding restrained his passion, turned to him and said, "Did you see this thing done, sir?" — "Yes, I did, sir," says the

relater. — "Well, sir," replies the gentleman, "since you affirm that you did see it, I am bound in regard to you to believe it; but upon my word, 't is such a thing, that if I had seen it myself, I would not have believed it." This broke the silence, set all the company a-laughing, and exposed the falsehood more than downright telling him it was a lie, which might, besides, have made a broil about it.

It is a strange thing that we cannot be content to tell a story as it is, but we must take from it on one side or add to it on another till the fact is lost among the addenda, and till in time even the man himself, remembering it only as he told it last, really forgets how it was originally. This being so generally practised now, nothing is more common than to have two men tell the same story quite differing one from another, yet both of them eye-witnesses to the fact related. These are that sort of people who, having once told a story falsely, tell it so often in the same or like manner, till they really believe it to be true.

This supplying a story by invention is certainly a most scandalous crime, and yet very little regarded in that part. It is a sort of lying that makes a great hole in the heart, at which by degrees a habit of lying enters in. Such a man comes quickly up to a total disregarding the truth of what he says, looking upon it as a trifle, a thing of no import, whether any story he tells be true or no, so it but commands the company, as they call it, that is to say, procures a laugh or a kind of amazement, things equally agreeable to these story-tellers, for the business is to affect the company; either startle them with something wonderful never heard of before, or made them laugh immoderately, as at something prodigiously taking, witty, and diverting.

It is hard to place this practice in a station equal

to its folly; 't is a meanness below the dignity of common-sense. They that lie to gain, to deceive, to delude, to betray, as above, have some end in their wickedness; and though they cannot give the design for an excuse of their crime, yet it may be given as the reason and foundation of it; but to lie for sport, for fun, as the boys express it, is to play at shuttle-cock with your soul, and load your conscience for the mere sake of being a fool, and the making a mere buffoonery of a story, the pleasure of what is below even madness itself.

And yet, how common is this folly? How is it the character of some men's conversation that they are made up of story! And how mean a figure is it they bear in company! Such men always betray their emptiness by this, and having only a certain number of tales in their budget, like a pedlar with his pack, they can only at every house show the same ware over again, tell the same story over and over, till the jest is quite worn out; and to convince us that much of it, if not all, is born of invention, they seldom tell it the same way twice, but vary it even in the most material facts; so that though it may be remembered that it was the same story, it ought never to be remembered that it was told by the same man.

With what temper should I speak of these people? What words can express the meanness and baseness of the mind that can do thus, that sin without design, and not only have no end in the view, but even no reflection in the act? The folly is grown up to a habit, and they not only mean no ill, but indeed mean nothing at all in it.

It is a strange length that some people run in this madness of life; and it is so odd, so unaccountable, that indeed 't is difficult to describe the man, though not difficult to describe the fact. What idea can be

formed in the mind of a man who does ill without meaning ill; that wrongs himself, affronts truth, and imposes upon his friends, and yet means no harm; or, to use his own words, means nothing; that if he thinks anything, it is to make the company pleasant? and what is this but making the circle a stage, and himself the Merry Andrew?

The best step such men can take is to lie on; and this shows the singularity of the crime. It is a strange expression, but I shall make it out. Their way is, I say, to lie on, till their character is completely known, and then they can lie no longer; for he whom nobody believes can deceive nobody, and then the essence of lying is removed; for the description of a lie is, that it is spoken to deceive, or 't is a design to deceive. Now, he that nobody believes can never lie any more, because nobody can be deceived by him. Such a man's character is a bill upon his forehead, by which everybody knows, "Here dwells a lying tongue." When everybody knows what is to be had of him they know what to expect, and so nobody is deceived; if they believe him afterwards 't is their fault as much as his.

There are a great many sorts of those people who make it their business to go about telling stories; it would be endless to enumerate them. Some tell formal stories forged in their own brain without any retrospect either on persons or things, I mean, as to any particular person or passage known or in being, and only with the ordinary introduction of "There was a man," or "There was a woman," and the like.

Others again, out of the same forge of invention, hammer out the very person, man or woman, and begin, "I knew the man," or, "I knew the woman," and these ordinarily vouch their story with more assurance than others, and vouch also that they knew the persons who were concerned in it.

The selling or writing a parable, or an illusive allegoric history, is quite a different case, and is always distinguished from this other jesting with truth, that it is designed and effectually turned for instructive and upright ends, and has its moral justly applied. Such are the historical parables in the Holy Scripture, such "The Pilgrim's Progress," and such, in a word, the adventures of your fugitive friend, "Robinson Crusoe."

Others make no scruple to relate real stories with innumerable omissions and additions; I mean, stories which have a real existence in fact, but which, by the barbarous way of relating, become as romantic and false as if they had no real original. These tales, like the old "Galley of Venice," which had been so often new vamped, doubled, and redoubled, that there was not one piece of the first timber in her, have been told wrong so often, and so many ways, till there would not be one circumstance of the real story left in the relating.

There are many more kinds of these, such, namely, as are personal and malicious, full of slander and abuse; but these are not of the kinds I am speaking of; the present business is among a kind of white devils, who do no harm or injury to any but to themselves; they are like the grasshopper, that spends his time to divert the traveller, and does nothing but starve himself. The conversation of these men is full of emptiness, their words are levity itself, and, according to the text, they not only tell untruths, but "the truth is not in them." There is not a settled awe or reverence of truth upon their minds; it is a thing of no value to them, it is not regarded in their discourse, and they give themselves a liberty to be perfectly unconcerned about the thing they say, or the story they tell, whether it be true or no.

This is a most abominable practice on another

account, namely, that these men make a jest of their crime. They are a sort of people that sin laughing, that play upon their souls as a man plays upon a fiddle, to make other people dance and wear itself out; they may be said to make some sport indeed, but it is all at themselves — they are the hearers' comedy and their own tragedy, and, like a penitent jack-pudding, they will at last say, "I have made others merry, but I have been the fool."

I would be glad to shame men of common-sense out of this horrid piece of buffoonery; and one thing I would warn them of, namely, that their learning to lie so currently in story will insensibly bring them to a bold entrenching upon truth in the rest of their conversation. The Scripture command is, "Let every man speak truth unto his neighbour." If we must tell stories, tell them as stories, and nothing wilfully to illustrate or set it forth in the relation. If you doubt the truth of it say so, and then every one will be at liberty to believe their share of it.

Besides, there is a spreading evil in telling a false story as true, namely, that you put it into the mouths of others, and it continues a brooding forgery to the end of time. It is a chimney-corner romance, and has in it this distinguishing article, that whereas parables and the inventions of men, published historically, are once for all related, and, the moral being drawn, the history remains allusive only as it was intended (as in several cases[1] may be instanced within our time[2] and without), here the case alters; fraud goes unto the world's end, for story never dies; every relater vouches it for truth, though he knows nothing of the matter.

These men know not what foundations they are laying for handing on the sport of lying, for such

[1] The "Pilgrim's Progress." (*Defoe.*)
[2] The "Family Instructor" and others. (*Defoe.*)

they make of it to posterity, not only leaving the example, but dictating the very materials for the practice; like family lies handed on from father to son, till what begun in forgery ends in history, and we make our lies be told for truth by all our children that come after us.

If any man object here that the preceding volumes of this work seem to be hereby condemned, and the history which I have therein published of myself censured, I demand in justice such objector stay his censure till he sees the end of the scene, when all that mystery shall discover itself, and I doubt not but the work shall abundantly justify the design, and the design abundantly justify the work.

CHAPTER FOUR

AN ESSAY ON THE PRESENT STATE OF RELIGION IN THE WORLD

IN that part of my work which may be called history, I have frequently mentioned the unconquerable impressions which dwelt upon my mind and filled up all my desires, immovably pressing me to a wandering, travelling life, and which pushed me continually on from one adventure to another, as you have heard.

There is an inconsiderate temper which reigns in our minds, that hurries us down the stream of our affections by a kind of involuntary agency, and makes us do a thousand things, in the doing of which we propose nothing to ourselves but an immediate subjection to our will, that is to say, our passion, even without the concurrence of our understandings, and of which we can give very little account after 't is done.

You may now suppose me to be arrived, after a long course of infinite variety on the stage of the world, to the scene of life we call old age, and that I am writing these sheets in a season of my time when (if ever) a man may be supposed capable of making just reflections upon things past, a true judgment of things present, and tolerable conclusions of things to come.

In the beginning of this life of composure (for now, and not till now, I may say that I began to live, that is to say, a sedate and composed life), I inquired of

myself very seriously one day what was the proper business of old age. The answer was very natural, and indeed returned quick upon me, namely, that two things were my present work, as above:

1. Reflection upon things past.
2. Serious application to things future.

Having resolved the business of life into these heads, I began immediately with the first; and as sometimes I took my pen and ink to disburden my thoughts when the subject crowded in fast upon me, so I have here communicated some of my observations for the benefit of those that come after me.

About the time that I was upon these inquiries, being at a friend's house, and talking much of my long travels, as you know travellers are apt to do, I observed an ancient gentlewoman in the company listened with a great deal of attention, and, as I thought, with some pleasure, to what I was saying; and after I had done, "Pray, sir," says she, turning her speech to me, "give me leave to ask you a question or two." — "With all my heart, madam," said I; so we began the following short dialogue: —

Old Gent. Pray, sir, in all your travels, can you tell what is the world a-doing? What have you observed to be the principal business of mankind?

Rob. Cru. Truly, madam, 't is very hard to answer such a question, the people being so differently employed, some one way, and some another; and particularly according to the several parts of the world through which our observations are to run, and according to the differing manners, customs, and circumstances of the people in every place.

Old. Gent. Alas! sir, that is no answer at all to me, because I am not a judge of the differing customs and manners of the people you speak of; but is there not one common end and design in the nature of men, which seems to run through all their

actions, and to be formed by Nature as the main end of life, and by consequence is made the chief business of living? Pray, how do they spend their time?

R. C. Nay; now, madam, you have added a question to the rest of a different nature from what, if I take you right, you meant at first.

Old Gent. What question, sir?

R. C. Why, how mankind spend their time; for I cannot say that one-half of mankind spend their time in what they themselves may acknowledge to be the main end of life.

Old Gent. Pray, don't distinguish me out of my question; we may talk of what is the true end of life, as we understood it here in a Christian country, another time; but take my question as I offer it, what is mankind generally a-doing as their main business?

R. C. Truly, the main business that mankind seems to be doing is to eat and drink; that's their enjoyment, and to get food to eat is their employment, including a little their eating and devouring one another.

Old Gent. That's a description of them as brutes.

R. C. It is so in the first part, namely, their living to eat and drink; but in the last part they are worse than the brutes; for the brutes destroy not their own kind, but all prey upon a different species; and besides, they prey upon one another for necessity, to satisfy their hunger, and for food; but man for baser ends, such as avarice, envy, revenge, and the like, devours his own species, nay, his own flesh and blood, as my Lord Rochester very well expresses it:

> But judge yourself, I'll bring it to the test,
> Which is the basest creature, man or beast?
> Birds feed on birds, beasts on each other prey,
> But savage man alone does man betray.

Pressed by necessity, they kill for food,
Man undoes man, to do himself no good.
With teeth and claws, by Nature armed they hunt,
Nature's allowance to suppy their want:
But man with smiles, embraces, friendship, praise,
Inhumanly his fellow's life betrays.
With voluntary pains works his distress,
Not for necessity, but wantonness.

Old Gent. All this I believe is true; but this does not reach my question yet. There is certainly something among them which is esteemed as more particularly the end of life and of living than the rest; to which they apply in common as the main business, and which is always esteemed to be their wisdom to be employed in. Is there not something that is apparently the great business of living?

R. C. Why, really, madam, I think not. For example: great part of the world, and a greater part by far than we imagine, is resolved into the lowest degeneracy of human nature, I mean, the savage life; where the chief end of life seems to be merely to eat and drink, that is to say, to get their food, just as the brutal life is employed, and indeed with very little difference between them; for except only speech and idolatry, I see nothing in the life of some whole nations of people, and for ought I know, containing millions of souls, in which the life of a lion or an elephant in the deserts of Arabia is not equal.

Old Gent. I could mention many things, sir, in which they might differ, but that is not the present thing I inquire about; but, pray, sir, is not religion the principal business of mankind in all the parts of the world? for I think you granted it when you named idolatry, which they, no doubt, call religion.

R. C. Really, madam, I cannot say it is; because, what with ignorance on one hand, and hypocrisy on the other, 't is very hard to know where to find religion in the world.

Old Gent. You avoid my question too laboriously, sir; I have nothing to do either with the ignorance or hypocrisy of the people; whether they are blindly devout, or knavishly and designedly devout, is not the case; but whether religion is not apparently the main business of the world, the principal apparent end of life, and the employment of mankind.

R. C. What do you call religion?

Old Gent. By religion, I mean the worshipping and paying homage to some supreme being; some God, known or unknown is not to the case, so it be but to something counted supreme.

R. C. It is true, madam, there are scarce any nations in the world so stupid but they give testimony to the being of a God, and have some notion of a supreme power.

Old Gent. That I know also, but that is not the main part of my question; but my opinion is, that paying a Divine worship, acts of homage and adoration, and particularly that of praying to the Supreme Being which they acknowledge, is derived to mankind from the light of Nature with the notion or belief itself.

R. C. I suppose, madam, you mean by the question then, whether the notion or belief of a God in general, and the sense of worship in particular, are not one and the same natural principle.

Old Gent. I do so, if you and I do but agree about what we call worship.

R. C. By worship, I understand adoration.

Old Gent. But there you and I differ again a little; for by worship, I understand supplication.

R. C. Then you must take them both in together, for some part of the Indian savages only adore.

Old Gent. I confess there is much adoration, where there is little supplication.

R. C. You distinguish too nicely, madam.

Old Gent. No, no, I do not distinguish in what I call worship; I allege that all the adoration of those poor savages is mere supplication: you say they lift up their hands to their idols, for fear they should hurt them.

R. C. I do say so, and it is apparent.

Old Gent. Why, that is the same thing, for then they lift up their hands to him, that is to say, pray to him not to hurt them; for all the worship in the world, especially the outward performance, may be resolved into supplication.

R. C. I agree with you in that, if you mean the apparent end of worship.

Old Gent. Why, did not your man Friday and the savage woman you tell us of, talk of their old idol they called Benamuckee? And what did they do?

R. C. It is very true they did.

Old Gent. And did not Friday tell you they went up to the hills, and said "O" to him? Pray, what was the meaning of saying "O" to him, but "O do not hurt us; for thou art omnipotent, and canst kill us: O heal our distempers; for thou art infinite, and canst do all things: O give us what we want, for thou art bountiful: O spare us, for thou art merciful:" and so of all the other conceptions of a God?

R. C. Well, madam, I grant all this; pray what do you infer from it? What is the reason of your question?

Old Gent. O sir, I have many inferences to draw from it for my own observation; I do not set up to instruct you.

I thought this serious old lady would have entertained a farther discourse with me on so fruitful a subject, but she declined it, and left me to my own meditation, which, indeed, she had raised up to an

unusual pitch ; and the first thing that occurred to me, was to put me upon inquiring after that nice thing I ought to call religion in the world, seeing really I found reason to think that there was much more devotion than religion in the world ; in a word, much more adoration than supplication ; and I doubt, as I come nearer home, it will appear that there is much more hypocrisy than sincerity — of which I may speak by itself.

In my first inquiries, I looked back upon my own travels, and it afforded me but a melancholy reflection, that in all the voyages and travels which I have employed two volumes in giving a relation of, I never set my foot in a Christian country ; no, not in circling three parts of the globe ; for excepting the Brazils, where the Portuguese indeed profess the Roman Catholic principles, which, however, in distinction from paganism, I will call the Christian religion — I say, except the Brazils, where also I made little stay, I could not be said to set foot in a Christian country, or a country inhabited by Christians, from the bay of Larache, and the port of Sallee, by the Strait's mouth, where I escaped from slavery, through the Atlantic Ocean, the coasts of Africa on one side, and of Caribbee, on the American shore, on the other side ; from thence to Madagascar, Malabar, and the bay and city of Bengal, the coast of Sumatra, Malacca, Siam, Cambodia, Cochin China, the empire and coast of China, the deserts of Karakathie, the Mongol Tartars, the Siberian, the Samoiede barbarians, and till I came within four or five days of Archangel in the Black Russia.

It is, I say, a melancholy reflection to think how all these parts of the world, and with infinite numbers of millions of people, furnished with the powers of reason and gifts of Nature, and many ways, if not every way, as capable of the reception of sublime

things as we are, are yet abandoned to the grossest ignorance and depravity; and that not in religion only, but even in all the desirable parts of human knowledge, and especially science and acquired knowledge.

What the Divine wisdom has determined concerning the souls of so many millions, it is hard to conclude, nor is it my present design to inquire; but this I may be allowed here, as a remark: if they are received to mercy in a future state, according to the opinion of some, as having not sinned against saving light, then their ignorance and pagan darkness is not a curse, but a felicity; and there are no unhappy people in the world, but those lost among Christians, for their sins against revealed light; nay, then being born in the regions of Christian light, and under the revelation of the Gospel doctrines, is not so much a mercy to be acknowledged as some teach us, and it may in a negative manner be true that the Christian religion is an efficient in the condemnation of sinners, and loses more than it saves, which is impious but to imagine. On the other hand, if all those nations are included under the sentence of eternal absence from God, which is hell in the abstract, then what becomes of all the sceptical doctrines of its being inconsistent with the mercy and goodness of an infinite and beneficent Being to condemn so great a part of the world, for not believing in Him of whom they never had any knowledge or instruction? But I desire not to be the promoter of unanswerable doubts in matters of religion; much less would I promote cavils at the foundations of religion, either as to its profession or practice, and therefore I only name things. I return to my inquiry after religion as we generally understand the word.

And in this I confine myself in my present in-

quiries to the particular nations professing the Christian religion only; and I shall take notice afterward what influence the want of religion has upon the manners, the genius, and the capacities of the people, as to all the improvable parts of human knowledge.

The Moors of Barbary are Mahometans, and that of the most unpolished and degenerate sort, especially of that part of the world where they live; they are cruel as beasts, vicious, insolent, and inhuman as degenerated nature can make them: moral virtues have so little recommended themselves to any among them, that they are accounted no accomplishment, and are in no esteem; nor is a man at all respected for being grave, sober, judicious, or wise, or for being just in his dealings, or most easy in his conversation; but rapine and injury is the custom of the place, and it is to recommend a great man that he is rich, powerful in slaves, merciless in his government of them, and imperiously haughty in his whole household. Every man is a king within himself, and regards neither justice or mercy, humanity or civility, either to those above him or those below him, but just as his arbitrary passions guide him.

Religion here is confined to the biram and the ramadan, the feast and the fast, to the mosque and the bath; reading the Alcoran on one hand, and performing the washings and purifications on the other, make up their religious exercises; and for the rest, conversation is eaten up with barbarisms and brutish customs; so that there is neither society, humanity, confidence in one another, or conversation with one another; but men live like the wild beasts, for every man here really would destroy and devour the other if he could.

This guided me to a just reflection, in honour of the Christian religion, which I have often since made

use of, and which on this occasion I will make a digression to, viz., that it is to be said for the reputation of the Christian religion in general, and by which it is justly distinguished from all other religions, that wherever Christianity has been planted or professed nationally in the world, even where it has not had a saving influence, it has yet had a civilising influence. It has operated upon the manners, the morals, the politics, and even the tempers and dispositions of the people; it has reduced them to the practice of virtue, and to the true methods of living; has weaned them from the barbarous customs they had been used to, infusing a kind of humanity and softness of disposition into their very natures; civilising and softening them, teaching them to love a regularity of life, and filling them with principles of generous kindness and beneficence one to another; in a word, it has taught them to live like men, and act upon the foundations of clemency, humanity, love, and good neighbourhood, suitable to the nature and dignity of God's image, and to the rules of justice and equity, which it instructs them in.

Nay, farther, I must observe also, that as the Christian religion has worn out, or been removed from any country, and they have returned to heathenism and idolatry, so the barbarisms have returned, the customs of the heathen nations have been again restored, the very nature and temper of the people have been again lost, all their generous principles have forsaken them, the softness and goodness of their dispositions have worn out, and they have returned to cruelty, inhumanity, rapine, and blood.

It is true, and it may be named as an objection to this remark of mine, that the Romans though heathens, and the Grecians by the study of philosophy in particular persons, and by the excellency

of their government in their general or national capacity, were filled with notions of virtue and honour, with most generous and just principles, and acted with an heroic mind on many occasions; practising the most sublime and exalted height of virtue, such as sacrificing their lives for their country with the utmost zeal; descending to great examples of humanity and beneficence, scorning to do base or vile actions, as unworthy the Roman name, to save their lives; and a great many most excellent examples of virtue and gallantry are found in the histories of the Roman Empire.

This does not oppose, or rather indeed illustrates, what I say; for with all the philosophy, all the humanity and generosity they practised, they had yet their remains of barbarity, were cruel and unmerciful in their natures, as appeared by the barbarity of their customs, such as throwing malefactors to wild beasts, the fightings of their gladiators, and the like; which were not only appointed as punishments and severities by the order of public justice, but to show it touched the very article I am upon, it was the subject of their sport and diversion, and these things were exhibited as shows to entertain the ladies; the cutting in pieces forty or fifty slaves, and the seeing twenty or thirty miserable creatures thrown to the lions and tigers, was no less pleasant to them than the going to see an opera, a masquerade, or a puppet-show is to us; so that I think the Romans were very far from a people civilised and softened in their natures by the influences of religion. And this is evident because that as the Christian religion came among them, all those cruel customs were abhorred by them, the famous theatres and circles for their public sports were overthrown, and the ruins of them testify the justice of my observation at this very day.

Nor will it be denied if I should carry this yet farther, and observe, that even among Christians, those who are reformed, and farther and farther Christianised, are still in proportion rendered more human, more soft and tender; and we do find, without being partial to ourselves, that even the Protestant countries are much distinguished in the humanity and softness of their tempers; the meek, merciful disposition extends more among Protestants than among the Papists, as I could very particularly demonstrate from history and experience.

But to return back to the Moors, where I left off; they are an instance of that cruelty of disposition which was anciently in their nature, and how in a country abandoned of the true Christian religion, after it has been first planted and professed among them, the return of heathenism or Mahometanism has brought back with it all the barbarisms of a nation void of religion and good nature.

I saw enough of these dreadful people to think them at this time the worst of all the nations of the world; a nation where no such thing as a generous spirit, or a temper with any compassion mixed with it, is to be found; among whom Nature appears stripped of all the additional glories which it derives from religion, and yet whereon a Christian flourishing church had stood several hundred years.

From these I went among the negroes of Africa; many of them I saw without any the least notion of a Deity among them, much less any form of worship; but I had not any occasion to converse with them on shore, other than I have done since by accident, but went away to the Brazils. Here I found the natives, and that even before the Portuguese came among them, and since also, had abundance of religion, such as it was; but it was all so bloody, so cruel, consisting of murders, human sacrifices, witchcrafts, sorceries,

and conjurings, that I could not so much as call them honest pagans, as I do the negroes.

As for the cannibals, as I have observed in the discourse of them, on account of their landing on my island, I can say but very little of them. As to their eating human flesh, I take it to be a kind of martial rage rather than a civil practice, for it is evident they eat no human creatures but such as are taken prisoners in their battles, and, as I have observed in giving the account of those things, they do not esteem it murder, no, nor so much as unlawful. I must confess, saving its being a practice in itself unnatural, especially to us, I say, saving that part, I see little difference between that and our way, which in the war is frequent in heat of action, viz., refusing quarter; for as to the difference between eating and killing those that offer to yield, it matters not much. And this I observed at the same time, that in their other conduct those savages were as human, as mild, and gentle as most I have met with in the world, and as easily civilised.

From these sorts of people I come to the Indians; for as to the Madagascar men, I saw very little of them, but that they were a kind of negroes, much like those on the coast of Guinea, only a little more used and accustomed to the Europeans by their often landing among them.

The East Indians are generally pagans or Mahometans, and have such mixtures of savage customs with them, that even Mahometanism is there in its corruption; neither have they there the upright just dealing, in matters of right and wrong, which the Turks in Europe have, with whom 't is generally very safe trading, but here they act all the parts of thieves and cheats, watching to deceive you, and proud of being thought able to do it.

The subjects of the Great Mogul have a seeming

polite government, and the inhabitants of Ceylon are under very strict discipline, and yet what difficulty do we find to trade with them? Nay, their very economy renders them fraudulent, and in some places they cannot turn their thoughts to being honest.

China is famous for wisdom, that is to say, that they, having such a boundless conceit of their own wisdom, we are obliged to allow them more than they have; the truth is, they are justly said to be a wise nation among the foolish ones, and may as justly be called a nation of fools among the wise ones.

As to their religion, 't is all summed up in Confucius's maxims, whose theology I take to be a rhapsody of moral conclusions; a foundation, or what we may call elements of polity, morality, and superstition, huddled together in a rhapsody of words, without consistency, and, indeed, with very little reasoning in it; then 't is really not so much as a refined paganism, for there are, in my opinion, much more regular doings among some of the Indians that are pagans, in America, than there are in China; and if I may believe the account given of the government of Montezuma in Mexico, and of the Uncas of Cusco in Peru, their worship and religion, such as it was, was carried on with more regularity than these in China. As to the human ingenuity, as they call it, of the Chinese, I shall account for it by itself. The utmost discoveries of it to me appeared in the mechanics, and even in them infinitely short of what is found among the European nations.

But let us take these people to pieces a little, and examine into the great penetration they are so famed for. First of all, their knowledge has not led them that length in religious matters which the common notions of philosophy would have done, and to which they did lead the wise heathens of old among the Grecian and Roman Empires, for they,

having not the knowledge of the true God, preserved, notwithstanding, the notion of a God to be something immortal, omnipotent, sublime; exalted above in place as well as authority, and therefore made heaven to be the seat of their gods, and the images by which they represented their gods and goddesses had always some perfections that were really to be admired as the attendants of their gods, as Jupiter was called the Thunderer for his power, father of gods and men, for his seniority; Venus, adored for her beauty; Mercury for swiftness; Apollo for wit, poetry, music; Mars for terror and gallantry in arms, and the like. But when we come to these polite nations of China, which yet we cry up for sense and greatness of genius, we see them grovelling in the very sink and filth of idolatry; their idols are the most frightful monstrous shapes, not the form of any real creature, much less the images of virtue, of chastity, of literature, but horrid shapes, of their priests' invention; neither hellish or human monsters, composed of invented forms, with neither face or figure, but with the utmost distortions, formed neither to walk, stand, fly, or go, neither to hear, see, or speak, but merely to instil horrible ideas of something nauseous and abominable into the minds of men that adored them.

If I may be allowed to give my notions of worship, I mean as it relates to the objects of natural homage, where the name and nature of God is not revealed, as in the Christian religion, I must acknowledge the sun, the moon, the stars, the elements, as in the pagan and heathen nations of old; and above all these, the representations of superior virtues and excellences among men, such as valour, fortitude, chastity, patience, beauty, strength, love, learning, wisdom, and the like — the objects of worship in the Grecian and Roman times — were far more

eligible and more rational objects of Divine rights than the idols of China and Japan, where, with all the economy of their State maxims and rules of civil government, which we insist so much on as tests of their wisdom, their great capacities and understandings, their worship is the most brutish, and the objects of their worship the coarsest, the most unmanly, inconsistent with reason or the nature of religion, of any the world can show; bowing down to a mere hobgoblin, and doing their reverence not to the work of men's hands only, but the ugliest, basest, frightfullest things that man could make; images so far from being lovely and amiable, as in the nature of worship is implied, that they are the most detestable and nauseous, even to nature.

How is it possible these people can have any claim to the character of wise, ingenious, polite, that could suffer themselves to be overwhelmed in an idolatry repugnant to common-sense, even to nature, and be brought to choose to adore that which was in itself the most odious and contemptible to nature; not merely terrible, that so their worship might proceed from fear, but a complication of nature's aversions?

I cannot omit, that being in one of their temples, or rather in a kind of oratory or chapel, annexed to one part of the great palace at Peking, there appeared a mandarin with his attendants, or, as we may say, a great lord and his retinue, prostrate before the image, not of any one of God's creatures, but a creature of mere human forming, such as neither was alive, nor was like anything that had life, or had ever been seen or heard of in the world.

The like image, or something worse, if I could give it a true representation, may be found in a garden chapel, if not defaced by wiser heads, of a great Tartarian mandarin, at a small distance from Nan-

king, and to which the poor abandoned creatures pay their most blinded devotions.

It had a thing instead of a head, but no head; it had a mouth distorted out of all manner of shape, and not to be described for a mouth, being only an unshapen chasm, neither representing the mouth of a man, beast, fowl, or fish; the thing was neither any of the four, but an incongruous monster; it had feet, hands, fingers, claws, legs, arms, wings, ears, horns, everything mixed one among another, neither in the shape or place that Nature appointed, but blended together and fixed to a bulk, not a body, formed of no just parts, but a shapeless trunk or log, whether of wood or stone, I know not; a thing that might have stood with any side forward, or any side backward, any end upward, or any end downward, that had as much veneration due to it on one side as on the other — a kind of celestial hedgehog, that was rolled up within itself, and was everything every way; that to a Christian could not have been worthy to have represented even the devil, and to men of common-sense must have been their very soul's aversion. In a word, if I have not represented their monstrous deities right, let imagination supply anything that can make a misshapen image horrid, frightful, and surprising; and you may with justice suppose those sagacious people called the Chinese, whom, forsooth, we must admire — I say, you may suppose them prostrate on the ground, with all their pomp and pageantry, which is in itself not a little, worshipping such a mangled, promiscuous-gendered creature.

Shall we call these a wise nation who represent God in such hideous, monstrous figures as these, and can prostrate themselves to things ten thousand times more disfigured than the devil? Had these images been contrived in the Romans' time, and

been set up for the god of ugliness, as they had their god of beauty, they might, indeed, have been thought exquisite, but the Romans would have spurned such an image out of their temples.

Nothing can render a nation so completely foolish and simple as such an extravagance in matters of religious worship; for if gross ignorance in the notion of a God, which is so extremely natural, will not demonstrate a nation unpolished, foolish, and weak, even next to idiotism, I know nothing that will.

But let me trace this wise nation that we talk so much of, and who not only think themselves wise, but have drawn us in to pay a kind of homage to their low-prized wit.

Government and the mechanic arts are the two main things in which our people in England, who have admired them so much, pretend they excel. As to their government, which consists in an absolute tyranny, which, by the way, is the easiest way of ruling in the world where the people are disposed to obey as blindly as the mandarin commands or governs imperiously, what policy is required in governing a people of whom it is said, that if you command them to hang themselves, they will only cry a little, and then submit immediately? Their maxims of government may do well enough among themselves, but with us they would be all confusion. In their country it is not so, only because whatever the mandarin says is a law, and God Himself has no power or interest among them to contradict it, unless He pleases to execute it *brevi manu* from heaven.

Most of their laws consist in immediate judgment, swift executions, just retaliations, and fair protection from injuries. Their punishments are cruel and exorbitant, such as cutting the hands and the feet off for theft, at the same time releasing murders and other flagrant crimes.

Their mandarins are their judges in very many cases, like our justices of the peace; but then they judge by customs, oral tradition, or immediate opinion, and execute the sentence immediately, without room or time to reflect upon the justice of it, or to consider of mitigations, as in all Christian countries is practised, and as the sense of human frailty would direct.

But let me come to their mechanics, in which their ingenuity is so much cried up. I affirm there is little or nothing sufficient to build the mighty opinion we have of them upon, but what is founded upon the comparisons which we make between them and other pagan nations, or proceeds from the wonder which we make that they should have any knowledge of mechanic arts, because we find the remote inhabitants of Africa and America so grossly ignorant and so entirely destitute in such things; whereas we do not consider that the Chinese inhabit the continent of Asia, and though they are separated by deserts and wildernesses, yet they are a continuous continent of land with the parts of the world once inhabited by the politer Medes, Persians, and Grecians; that the first ideas of mechanic arts were probably received by them from the Persians, Assyrians, and the banished transplanted Israelites, who are said to be carried into the regions of Parthia and the borders of Karakathie, from whence they are also said to have communicated arts, and especially handicraft, in which the Israelites excelled, to the inhabitants of all those countries, and, consequently, in time to those beyond them.

But let them be received from whom they will, and how long ago soever, let us but compare the improvement they have made with what others have made; and, except in things peculiar to themselves, by their climate, we shall find the utmost of their in-

genuity amounts but to a very trifle, and that they are outdone even in the best of their works by our ordinary artists, whose imitations exceed their originals beyond all comparison.

For example, they have gunpowder and guns, whether they have learned to make them by direction of Europeans, which is most likely, or that they found it out by mere strength of invention, as some would advance, though without certainty, in their favour — be it which it will, as I say, it matters not much, their powder is of no strength for the needful operations of sieges, mines, batteries, no, nor for shooting of birds, as ours is, without great quantities put together; their guns are rather an ostentation than for execution, clumsy, heavy, and ill-made; neither have they arrived to any tolerable degree of knowledge in the art of gunnery or engineering. They have no bombs, carcasses, hand-grenades; their artificial fireworks are in no degree comparable or to be named with ours; nor have they arrived to anything in the military skill — in marshalling armies, handling arms, discipline, and the exercise in the field — as the Europeans have; all which is depending on the improvement of firearms, &c., in which, if they have had the use of gunpowder so many ages as some dream, they must be unaccountable blockheads that they have made no farther improvement; and if it is but lately, they are yet apparently dull enough in the managing of it, at least compared to what ought to be expected of an ingenious people, such as our people cry them up to be.

I might go from this to their navigation, in which it is true they outdo most of their neighbours; but what is all their skill in sailing compared to ours? Whither do they go? and how manage the little and foolish barks and junks they have? What would they do with them to traverse the great Indian,

American, or Atlantic oceans? What ships, what sailors, what poor, awkward, and ignorant doings are there among them at sea! And when our people hire any of them, as sometimes they are obliged to do, how do our sailors kick them about, as a parcel of clumsy, ignorant, unhandy fellows!

Then for building of ships, what are they? and what are they able to do towards the glorious art of building a large man-of-war? It is out of doubt with me, that all the people of China could not build such a ship as the "Royal Sovereign" in a hundred years; no, not though she was there for them to look at and take pattern by.

I might go on to abundance more things, such as painting, making glasses, making clocks and watches, making bone-lace, frame-work knitting; all of which, except the two first, they know little or nothing; and of the two first nothing compared to what is done in Europe.

The height of their ingenuity, and for which we admire them with more colour of cause than in other things, is their porcelain or earthenware work, which, in a word, is more due to the excellent composition of the earth they make them of, and which is their peculiar, than to the workmanship; in which, if we had the same clay, we should soon outdo them as much as we do in other things. The next art is their manufacturing in fine silks, cotton, herba, gold, and silver, in which they have nothing but what is in common with our ordinary poor weavers.

The next mechanic art is their lacquering, which is just, as in their China ware, a peculiar to their country, in the materials, not at all in the workmanship; and as for the cabinet-work of it they are manifestly outdone by us; and abundance is every year sent thither framed and made in England, and only lacquered in China, to be returned to us.

I might run the like parallel through most of the things these people excel in, which would all appear to be so deficient as would render all their famed wisdom and capacity most scandalously imperfect. But I am not so much upon their cunning in arts as upon their absurdity and ridiculous folly in religious matters, and in which I think the rudest barbarians outdo them.

From this wise nation we have a vast extent of ground, near two thousand miles in breadth, partly under the Chinese government, partly under the Muscovite, but inhabited by Tartars of Mongol Tartary, Karakathie, Siberian, and Samoiedes pagans, whose idols are almost as hideous as the Chinese's, and whose religion is all Nature — and not only so, but Nature under the greatest degeneracy, and next to brutal. Father le Comte gives us the pictures of some of their house idols, and an account of their worship; and this lasts, as I have observed, to within a few days of Archangel. So that, in a word, from the mouth of the Straits, that is to say, from Sallee over to Caribbee, from thence round Africa by the Cape of Good Hope, across the vast Indian Ocean, and upon all the coast of it, about by Malacca and Sumatra, through the straits of Singapore and the coast of Siam northwards to China, and through China by land over the deserts of the Grand Tartary to the river Dwina, being a circuit three times the diameter of the earth, and every jot as far as the whole circumference, the name of God is not heard of, except among a few of the Indians that are Mahometans; the Word of God is not known, or the Son of God spoken of.

Having some warmth in my search after religion, occasioned by this reflection, and so little of it appearing in all the parts which I had travelled, I resolved to travel over the rest of the world in books,

for my wandering days are pretty well over ; I say, I resolved to travel the rest in books ; and sure, said I, there must appear abundance of serious religion in the rest of the world, or else I know nothing at all of where I shall find it.

But I find by my reading, just as I did in travelling, that all the customs of nations, as to religion, were much alike ; that, one with another, they are more devout in their worship of something, whatever it be, than inquisitive after what it is they worship ; and most of the altars of worship in the world might to this day be inscribed to the unknown God.

This may seem a strange thing ; but that wonder may cease when further inquiry is made into the particular objects of worship which the several nations of the world bow down to, some of which are so horrid, so absurd, as one would think human nature could not sink so low as to do her homage in so irrational a manner.

And here, being to speak of religion as idolatrous, it occurs to me that it seemed strange that, except in Persia and some part of Tartary, I found none of the people look up for their gods, but down ; by which it came into my mind that, even in idolatry itself, the world was something degenerated, and their reason was more hoodwinked than their ancestors'.

By looking up and looking down, I mean, they do not, as the Romans, look up among the stars for their idols, place their gods in the skies, and worship, as we might say, like men, but look down among the brutes, form idols to themselves out of the beasts, and figure things like monsters, to adore them for their ugliness and horrible deformity.

Of the two, the former, in my opinion, was much the more rational idolatry, as particularly the Persians worshipping the sun ; and when I had a particular account of that of Bengal, it presently occurred

to my thoughts that there was something awful, something glorious and godlike in the sun, that, in the ignorance of the true God, might rationally bespeak the homage of the creatures; and to whom it seemed reasonable, where reason was its own judge only, without the helps of Revelation, to pay an adoration as the parent of light, and the giver of life to all the vegetative world, and as in a visible manner enlivening and influencing the rational and sensitive life, and which might, for aught they knew, at first create, as it did since so plainly affect, all things round us.

This thought gave birth to the following excursion, with which I shall close this observation:

Hail! glorious lamp, the parent of the day,
Whose beams not only heat and life convey;
But may that heat and life, for aught we know,
On many, many distant worlds bestow.
Immense, amazing globe of heavenly fire,
To whom all flames ascend, in whom all lights expire,
Rolling in flames, emits eternal ray,
Yet self-sufficient suffers no decay.
Thy central vigour never, never dies,
But life the motion, motion life supplies,
When lesser bodies rob us of thy beams,
And intercept thy flowing, heavenly streams;
Fools by mistake eclipse thee from their sight,
When 't is the eyes eclipsed, and not thy light.
Thy absence constitutes effectual night
When rolling earth deprives us of thy light;
And planets all opaque and beggarly,
Borrow thy beams, and strive to shine like thee;
In their mock, lifeless light we starve and freeze,
And wait the warmth of thy returning rays.
Thy distance leaves us all recline and sad,
And hoary winter governs in thy stead:
Swift thy returning vigour, warm and mild,
Salutes the earth, and gets the world with child.
Great soul of nature, from whose vital spring
Due heat and life diffused through everything:
Govern'st the moon and stars by different ray,
She queen of night, thee monarch of the day,
The moon, and stars, and earth, and plants obey.

When darker nations see thee placed on high,
And feel thy warmth their genial heat supply;
How imperceptible thy influence
Slides through their veins, and touches every sense;
By glimmering nature led, they bow their knee,
Mistake their God, and sacrifice to thee,
Mourn thy declining steps, and hate the night,
But when in hope of thy approaching light,
Bless thy return, which brings the cheerful day,
And to thy wond'rous light false adorations pay.
Nor can we blame the justice of the thought,
In minds by erring reason only taught.
Nature, it seems, instructs a deity,
And reason says there 's none so bright as thee.
Nor is thy influence so much a jest,
There 's something shocks our nature in the rest:
To make a God, and then the tool adore,
And bow to that that worshipped us before.
The nonsense takes off all the reverence,
That can't be worshipping that is not sense.
But when the spring of Nature shows its face,
The glory of its rays, the swiftness of its race,
Stupendous height and majesty divine,
And with what awful splendour it can shine,
Who that no other news from heaven could hear,
Would think but this was God, would think and fear.
No other idol ever came so near.

Certain it is that the Persians, who thus paid their adoration to the sun, were at that time some of the wisest people in the world. Some tell us that the great image that Nebuchadnezzar set up for all his people to worship, was represented holding the sun in his right hand; and that it was to the representation of the sun that he commanded all nations and kindreds to bow and to worship. If so, then the Assyrians were worshippers also of the sun as well as the Persians, which is not at all improbable. We read also in the Scripture of those nations who worshipped all the host of heaven, a thing much more rational, and nearer of kin to worshipping the great God of heaven than worshipping the whole host of the earth, and worshipping the most abject and loathsome creatures, or but even the repre-

sentations of those creatures, which was still worse than the other.

But what are all the absurdities of heathenism, which at last are resolved into the degeneracy of mankind, and their being fallen from the knowledge of the true God, which was once, as we have reason to believe, diffused to all mankind? I say, what are these? And how much ground for just reflection do they afford us, compared to the gross things in practice which we find every day among those nations who profess to have had the clear light of Gospel revelation?

How many self-contradicting principles do they hold? How contrary to their profession do they act? How does one side burn for what another side abhors? And how do Christians, taking that venerable name for a general appellation, doom one another to the devil for a few disagreeing clauses of the same religion, while all profess to worship the same Deity, and to expect the same salvation?

With what preposterous enthusiasms do some mingle their knowledge, and with as gross absurdities others their devotion? How blindly superstitious; how furious and raging in their zeal? How cruel, inexorable, and even inhuman and barbarous to one another, when they differ? as if religion divested us of humanity, and that in our worshipping a God of mercy, and in whose compassions alone it is that we have room to hope, we should, to please and serve Him, banish humanity from our nature, and show no compassion to those that fall into our hands.

In my travelling through Portugal, it was my lot to come to Lisbon while they held there one of their courts of justice called *Auto-de-fe*, that is to say, a court of justice of the Inquisition. It is a subject which has been handled by many writers, and indeed

exposed by some of the best Catholics; and my present business is not to write a history, or engage in a dispute, but to relate a passage.

They carried in procession all their criminals to the great church, where eight of them appeared first, dressed up in gowns and caps of canvas, upon which were painted all that man could devise of hell's torments, devils broiling and roasting human bodies, and a thousand such frightful things, with flames and devils besides in every part of the dress.

Those I found were eight poor creatures condemned to be burnt, and for they scarce knew what, but for crimes against the Catholic faith, and against the blessed Virgin, and they were burnt. One of them, it was said, rejoiced that he was to be burnt, and being asked why, answered that he had much rather die than be carried back to the prison of the Inquisition, where their cruelties were worse than death. Of those eight, as I was told, some were Jews, whose greatest crime, as many there did not scruple to say, was that they were very rich; and some Christians were in the number at the same time, whose greatest misery was that they were very poor.

It was a sight that almost gave me a shock in my notion of Christianity itself, till I began to recollect that it might be possible that Inquisitors were scarce Christians, and that I knew many Catholic countries do not suffer this abominable judicature to be erected among them.

I have seen much, and read more, of the unhappy conduct, in matters of religion, among the other nations of the world professing the Christian religion; and upon my word I find some practices infinitely scandalous, some which are the common received customs of Christians, which would be the abhorrence of heathens; and it requires a strong attach-

ment to the foundation, which is indeed the principal part in religion, to guard our minds against being offended even at the Christian religion itself, but I got over that part afterward.

Let it not offend the ears of any true lover of the Christian religion that I observe some of the follies of the professors of the Christian religion, assuring you 't is far from being my design to bring the least scandal upon the profession itself.

And here, therefore, let me give the words of a judicious person who travelled from Turkey through Italy. His words are these : —

"When I was in Italy I ranged over great part of the patrimony of St. Peter, where one would think, indeed, the face of religion would be plainest to be seen, and without any disguise ; but, in short, I found there the face of religion, and no more.

"At Rome there was all the pomp and glory of religious habits : the Pope and the cardinals walked with a religious gravity, but lived in a religious luxury, kept up the pomp of religion and the dignity of religious titles ; but, like our Lord's observation on the Pharisees, I found within they were all ravening wolves.

"The religious justice they do there is particularly remarkable, and very much recommends them. The Church protects murderers and assassins, and then delivers the civil magistrates over to Satan for doing justice. They interdict whole kingdoms, and shut up the churches for want of paying a few ecclesiastic dues, and so put a stop to religion for want of their money. I found the courtesans were the most constant creatures at the church, and the most certain place for an assignation with another man's wife was at prayers.

"The Court of Inquisition burnt two men for speaking dishonourably of the blessed Virgin, and

the missionaries in China tolerated the worshipping the devil by their new convert. A Jew was likewise burnt for denying Christ, while the Jesuits joined the paganism of the heathen with the high mass, and sung anthems to the immortal idols of Tonquin.

"When I saw this I resolved to inquire no more after religion in Italy, till by accident meeting with a quietist, he gave me to understand that all religion was internal, that the duties of Christianity were summed up in reflection and ejaculation. He inveighed bitterly against the game of religion which he said was playing over the world by the clergy; and said Italy was a theatre, where religion was the grand opera, and the Popish clergy were the stage players. I liked him in many of his notions about other people's religion; but when I came to talk with him a little closely about his own, it was so wrapped up in his internals, concealed in the cavities and dark parts of the soul, viz., meditation without worship, doctrine without practice, reflection without reformation, and zeal without knowledge, that I could come to no certainty with him but in this, that religion in Italy was really invisible."

This was very agreeable to my notions of Italian religion, and to what I had met with from other people that had travelled the country, but one observation of blindness and superstition I must give within my own knowledge, and nearer home. When passing through Flanders I found the people in a certain city there in a very great commotion. The case was this. A certain scelerate (so they call an abandoned wretch given up to all wickedness) had broken into a chapel in the city, and had stolen the pix or casket wherein the sacred host was deposited; which host, after rightly consecrated, they believe to be the real body of our blessed Saviour, being tran-

substantiated, as they call it, from the substance of bread.

The fact being discovered, the city, as I said above, was all up in a tumult; the gates were shut up, nobody suffered to go out, every house was searched, and the utmost diligence used; and at length, as it was next to impossibility he should escape, he was discovered.

His execution was not long deferred. But first he was examined, and I think by torture, what he had done with the sacred thing which was in the pix, which he had stolen? And at length he confessed that he had thrown it into a house of office, and was carried with a guard to show them the place.

As it was impossible to find a little piece of a wafer in such a place, though no pains were spared in a most filthy manner to search for it; but, as I say, it could not be found; immediately the place was judged consecrated *ipso facto*, turned into an oratory, and the devout people flocked to it to expiate, by their prayers, the dishonour done to the Lord God by throwing His precious body into so vile a place. It was determined by the wiser part that the body would not fall down into the place, but be snatched up by its inherent power, or by the holy angels, and not be suffered to touch the excrements in that place. However, the people continued their devotions for some time just in the place where it was, and afterwards a large chapel was built upon it, where the same prayers are continued, as I suppose, to this day.

I had a particular occasion to come at a very accurate account of Poland by a Polish gentleman, in whose company I travelled, and from whom I learned all that was worth inquiring of about religious affairs in Prussia on one side and Muscovy on the other.

As for Poland, he told me they were all confusion

both in Church and in State; that notwithstanding their wars they were persecutors of the worst kind, that they let the Jews live among them undisturbed to such a degree, that in the country about Lemburg and Kiow there were reckoned above 30,000 Jews; that these had not toleration only but many privileges granted them, though they denied Christ to be the Messiah, or that the Messiah was come in the flesh, and blasphemed His name upon frequent occasions; and at the same time they persecuted the Protestants, and destroyed their churches, wherever they had power to do it.

On the other hand, when I came to inquire of those Protestants, and what kind of people they were who suffered so severely for their religion, I found they were generally a sort of Protestants called Socinians, and that Lelius Socinus had spread his errors so universally over this country that our Lord Jesus Christ was reduced here to little more than a good man sent from heaven to instruct the world, and far from capable of effecting by the influence of His Spirit and grace the glorious work of redeeming the world. As for the divinity of the Holy Ghost, they have no trouble about it.

Having given this account of knowledge and piety in the countries inhabited by Christians of the Roman Church, it seems natural to say something of the Greek Church.

There are in the Czar of Muscovy's dominions abundance of wooden churches, and had not the country been as full of wooden priests something might have been said for the religion of the Muscovites, for the people are wonderfully devout there; which would have been very well, if it had not been attended with the profoundest ignorance that was ever heard of in any country where the name of Christian was so much as talked of.

But when I came to inquire about their worship, I found our Lord Jesus Christ made so much a meaner figure among them than St. Nicholas that I concluded religion was swallowed up of superstition, and so indeed I found it was upon all occasions: as to the conduct of the people in religious matters, their ignorance is so established upon obstinacy, which is the Muscovite's national sin, that it would be really to no purpose to look any longer for a reformation among them.

In short, no man will, I believe, say of me that I do the Muscovites any wrong when I say they are the most ignorant and most obstinate people in the Christian world, when I tell the following story of them.

It was after the battle at Narva, where the late King of Sweden, Charles XII., defeated their great army, and after the victory extended his troops pretty far into their country, and perhaps plundered them a little as he advanced; when the Muscovites, we may be sure, being in the utmost distress and confusion, fell to their prayers. We read of nothing they had to say to God Almighty in that case; but to their patron saint they addressed this extraordinary prayer:

"O thou, our perpetual comforter in all our adversities! thou infinitely powerful St. Nicholas, by what sin, and how have we highly offended thee in our sacrifices, genuflections, reverences, and actions of thanksgiving, that thou hast thus forsaken us? We had therefore sought to appease thee entirely, and we had implored thy presence and thy succour against the terrible, insolent, dreadful, enraged, and undaunted enemies and destroyers; when, like lions, bears, and other savage beasts that have lost their young ones, they attacked us after an insolent and terrible manner; and terrified and wounded, took

and killed us by thousands, us who are thy people. Now, as it is impossible that this should happen without witchcraft and enchantment, seeing the great care that we had taken to fortify ourselves, after an impregnable manner, for the defence and security of thy name, we beseech thee, O St. Nicholas, to be our champion, and the bearer of our standard, to be with us both in peace and in war, and in our necessities, and at the time of our death, to protect us against this horrible and tyrannical crew of sorcerers, and to drive them far enough off from our frontiers, with the recompense which they may deserve."

It may be hoped I may give a better account of religion among the Protestants than I have among the Roman and Grecian Churches; and I will, if in justice it is possible.

The next to the nations I have been mentioning, I mean in geographical order, are those reformed Christians called Lutherans; to say no worse of them, the face of religion indeed is altered much between these and the latter. But I scarce know what name to give it, at least as far as I have inquired into it, or what it is like.

It was Popery and no Popery; there was the consub. but not the transub. The service differed indeed from the mass, but the deficiency seemed to be made up very much with the trumpets, kettle-drums, fiddles, hautboys, &c., and all the merry part of the Popish devotion; upon which it occurred to me presently, that if there was no danger of Popery among the Lutherans, there was danger of superstition; and as for the pious part, I saw very little of it in either of them.

By religion, therefore, the reader is desired to understand here not the principles upon which the several nations denominate themselves, so much as the

manner in which they discover themselves to be sincere in the profession which they make. I had no inclination here to enter into the inquiry after the creeds which every nation professed to believe, but the manner in which they practised that religion which they really professed; for what is religion to me without practice? And although it may be true that there can be no true religion where it is not professed upon right principles; yet, that which I observe here, and which to me is the greatest grievance among Christians, is the want of a religious practice even where there are right principles at bottom, and where there is a profession of the orthodox faith.

In brief, I am not hunting after the profession of religion, but the practice. The first I find almost in every nation — *nulla gens tam barbara;* but the last I am like to travel through the histories of all Christendom with my search, and perhaps may hardly be able, when I have done, to tell you where it is.

All the satire of this inquiry will look this way; for where God has not given a people the blessing of a true knowledge of Himself, it would call for our pity, not reproach. It would be a very dull satire indeed that a man should be witty upon the negroes in Africa for not knowing Christ, and not understanding the doctrine of a Saviour; but if turning to our modern Christians of Barbadoes and Jamaica for not teaching them, not instructing them, and for refusing to baptize them, there the satire would be pointed and seasonable, as we shall hear farther by-and-by.

But to return to the Lutherans, for there I am supposed to be at this time, I mean, among the courts and cities of Brandenburg, Saxony, &c., — I had opportunity here to view a court affecting gallantry, magnificence, and gay things, to such a

height, and with such a passion, to exceed the whole world in that empty part of human felicity called show, that I thought it was impossible to pursue it with such an impetuous torrent of the affections without sacrificing all things to it which wise men esteem more valuable.

Nor was my notion wrong; for the first thing I found sacrificed, as I say, to this voluptuous humour was the liberties of the people, who being by constitution or custom rather under absolute government, and at the arbitrary will of the prince, are sure to pay, not all they can spare, but even all they have, to gratify the unbounded appetite of a court given up to pleasure and exorbitance.

By all I have read of the manner of living there, both court and people, the latter are entirely given up to the former, not by necessity only, but by the consent of custom and the general way of management through the whole country; nay, this is carried to such a height that, as I have been told, the king's coffers are the general cesspool of the nations, whither all the money of the kingdoms flows, and only disperses again as that gives it out — whether by running over or running out at its proper vent, I do not inquire; so that as all the blood in the human body circulates in twenty-four hours through the ventricles of the heart, so all the money in the kingdom is said to pass once a year through the king's treasury.

How far poverty and misery may prompt piety and devotion among the poor inhabitants, I cannot say; but if luxury and gallantry, together with tyranny and oppression to support it, can subsist with true religion in the great men, then, for aught I know, the courts of Prussia and Dresden may be the best qualified in the world to produce this thing called religion, which, I have hitherto seen, is hard to be found.

It is true, that the magnificence of the wisest king in the world in Jerusalem was esteemed the felicity of his people; but it seems to be expressed very elegantly, not as a testimony of his glory only, but of the flourishing condition of his people at the same time, under the prosperous circumstances which his reign brought them to, viz., that he made gold to be for plenty like the stones in the streets, amply expressing the flourishing condition of his people under him.

I have likewise read, indeed, and heard much of the same kind of the King of Prussia, and that even from his own subjects, who were always full of the generous and truly royal qualities of that prince; he was the first king of the country, which before was a dukedom or electorate only. The sum of their discourse is, that his majesty was so true a father of his country and of his people, that his whole care was the flourishing of their trade, establishing their manufactures, increasing their numbers, planting foreigners — French, Swiss, and other nations — among them to instruct and encourage them; and being no way accessory to any of their oppressions, but relieving and redressing all their grievances as often and as soon as they came to his knowledge; and, indeed, I could not but entertain a great regard to the character of so just and good a prince. But all I could infer from that was, that a government may be tyrannical, and yet the king not be a tyrant; but the grievances to the people are oftentimes much the same. And every administration, where the constitution is thus stated, as it seems to be in most, if not all of the northern courts, Protestant as well as others, seems inconsistent with the true ends of government; the thing we call government was certainly established for the prosperity of the people; whereas, on the contrary, in all those German courts, where I

have made my observations, the magnificence of the court and the prosperity of the people stand like the two poles; what excess of light you see at one is exactly balanced by so much darkness at the other.

And where, pray, is the religion of all this? that a whole nation of people should appear miserable that their governors may appear gay; the people starve, that the prince may be fed; or rather, the people be lean, that their sovereign may be fat; the subjects sigh, that he may laugh; be empty, that he may be full; and all this for mere luxury, not for the needful defence of the government — resisting enemies, preserving the public peace, and the like, but for mere extravagance, luxury, and magnificence, as in Prussia; or for ambition, and pushing at crowns, and the lust of domination, as in Saxony.

But to come back to the religious transactions of these countries: how are the ecclesiastics, jealous of their hierarchy, afraid to reform farther lest, as they gave a mortal stab to the perquisites and vails of God Almighty's service in the Romish Church, modern reformation might give the like to them? For this reason they set a pale about their Church, and there, as well as in other places, they cry to their neighbours, "Stand off, I am holier than thou;" and with what persecution and invasion — persecuting for religion, and invading the principles of one another. If there was any peace among them, it was that only which passes all understanding. It presently occurred to me, what charity can here be where there is no peace? and what religion where there is no charity? And I began to fear I should find little of what I looked for in those odd climates.

I had travelled personally through the heart of France, where I had occasion to look round me often enough in my route from the foot of the Pyrenean

mountains to Toulouse, from thence to Paris and Calais. Here I found the people so merry and yet so miserable, that I knew not where to make any judgment. The poverty of the poor was so great that it seemed to leave them no room to sigh for anything but their burdens, or to pray for anything but bread. But the temper of the people was so volatile, that I thought they went always dancing to church and came singing out of it.

I found a world of teachers here, but nobody taught. The streets were everywhere full of priests, and the churches full of women; but as for religion, I found most of the clergy were so far from having much of it, that few of them knew what it was. Never surely was a nation so full of truly blind guides; for nothing can be more grossly ignorant of religion than many of their clergy are, nothing more void of morals than many of those to whom other people go to confess their sins.

I made some inquiry about religion; and among the rest I happened to fall in company with a good honest Huguenot *incognito;* and he told me very honestly that the state of religion in France stood thus: First, that for some years ago it was put to the test by the king, and that was when the edicts came out to banish and ruin the Huguenots; "At which time," said he, "we thought there had been a great deal of religion in it; but really, when it came to the push," said he, "it was hard to tell where we should find it. The persecution, as it was thought at first, would be ingrateful to the more religious Roman Catholics, and that some would be found too good to do the drudgery of the devil. But we were mistaken; the best fell in with persecution when it was done by other hands and not their own, and those that would not do it acknowledged they rejoiced that it was done; which

showed," said he, "that the Catholics either had no principle, or acted against principle, which is much as one. And as for us Huguenots," says he, "we have shown that we have no religion lost among us; for, first, some run away for their religion and yet left it behind them, and we that stayed behind did it at the price of our principles. For now," says he, "we are mere hypocrites, neither Papists nor Huguenots, for we go to mass with Protestant hearts; and while we call ourselves Protestants, we bow in the house of Rimmon." — "Where, then," said I, "is the religion once boasted of here to be found?" — "Indeed," said he, "it is hard to tell you, and except a little that is in the galleys, I can give you no good account of it." This, indeed, was confining the remains of a flourishing church to about 350 confessors, who really suffered martyrdom for it — for it was no less. So I minuted down French religion tugging at the oar, and would have come away.

But it came into my thought to ask him what he meant by telling me that those who run away for their religion out of France left most of it behind them? He answered, I should judge of it better if I observed them when I came into my own country; where, if I found they lived better than other people, or showed anything of religion suitable to a people that suffered persecution for their profession, I should send word of it; for he had heard quite otherwise of them, which was the reason why he and thousands of others did not follow them.

It happened, while I was warm in my inquiries thus after religion, a proclamation came out in London for appointing a general thanksgiving for a great victory obtained by the English forces and their confederates over the French at [Ramillies]. I care not to put names to the particular times of things.

I started at the noise when they cried it in the streets. Ah! said I, then I have found it at last; and I rejoiced, in particular, that having looked so much abroad for religion I should find it out at home. Then I began to call myself a thousand fools, that I had not saved myself all this labour and looked at home first; though, by-the-bye, I had done no more in this than other travellers often or indeed generally do, viz., go abroad to see the world and search into the curiosities of foreign countries, and know nothing of their own.

But to return to my observations. I was resolved to see the ceremonies of this pious piece of work; and as the preparations for it were prodigiously great, I inquired how it would be; but nobody could remember that the like had ever been in their time before. Every one said it would be very fine, that the queen would be there herself, and all the nobility; and that the like had never been seen since Queen Elizabeth's time.

This pleased me exceedingly; and I began to form ideas in my mind of what had been in former times among religious nations; I could find nothing of what I was made to expect, unless it was Solomon's dedication of the temple, or Josiah's great feast of the reformation; and I expected God would have a most royal tribute of praise.

But it shocked me a little that the people said there had never been such a thanksgiving since Queen Elizabeth's time. What, thought I, can be the reason of that? and musing a little, O! says I to myself, now I have found it; I suppose nobody gives God thanks in our country but queens. But this looked a little harsh, and I rummaged our histories a little for my farther satisfaction, but could make nothing of it. At last, talking of it to a good old cavalier, that had been a soldier for King

Charles, "Oh," says he, "I can tell you the reason of it; they have never given thanks," says he, "because they have had nothing to give thanks for. Pray," says he, "when have they had any victories in England since Queen Elizabeth's time, except two or three in Ireland in King William's time? and then they were so busy, had so many losses with them abroad, that they were ashamed to give thanks for them."

This I found had too much truth in it, however bitter the jest of it; but still heightened my expectation, and made me look for some strange seriousness and religious thankfulness in the appearance that was to be on the occasion in hand; and accordingly I secured myself a place, both without and within the church, where I might be a witness to every part of the devotion and joy of the people.

But my expectations were wound up to a yet greater pitch when I saw the infinite crowds of people throng with so much zeal, as I, like a charitable coxcomb, thought it to be, to the place of the worship of God; and when I considered that it was to give God thanks for a great victory, I could think of nothing else than the joy of the Israelites, when they landed on the banks of the sea and saw Pharaoh's army, horses, and chariots, swallowed up; and I doubted not I should hear something like the song of Moses and the children of Israel on the occasion, and should hear it sung with the same elevation of soul.

But when I came to the point, the first thing I observed was that nine parts of ten of all the company came there only to see the queen and the show, and the other tenth part, I think, might be said to make the show.

When the queen came to the rails, and descended from her coach, the people, instead of crying out

"Hosannah, blessed be the queen that cometh in the name of the Lord," I say, the people cried "Murder" and "Help, for God's sake," treading upon one another, and stifling one another at such a rate, that in the rear of the two lines or crowds of people through which the queen passed it looked something like a battle where the wounded were retired to die and to get surgeons to come to them; for there lay heaps of women and children dragged from among the feet of the crowd, and gasping for breath. I went among some of them, and asked them what made them go into such a crowd? and their answer was all the same, "O sir, I had a mind to see the queen, as the rest did."

Well, I had my answer here indeed; for in short, the whole business of the thanksgiving without doors was to see the queen, that was plain; so I went away to my stand, which, for no less than three guineas, I had secured in the church.

When I came there it was my fate to be placed between the seats where the men of God performed the service of His praise, and sung out the anthems and the *Te Deum*, which celebrated the religious triumph of the day.

As to the men themselves, I liked their office, their vestments, and their appearance; all looked awful and grave enough, suitable in some respects to the solemnity of a religious triumph; and I expected they would be as solemn in their performances as the Levites that blew the trumpets at Solomon's feast, when all the people shouted and praised God.

But I observed these grave people, in the intervals of their worshipping God, when it was not their turn to sing, or read, or pray, bestowed some of the rest of their time in taking snuff, adjusting their perukes, looking about at the fair ladies, whispering, and that

not very softly neither, to one another, about this fine lady, that pretty woman, this fine duchess, and that great fortune, and not without some indecencies, as well of words as of gestures. Well, says I, you are none of the people I look for; where are they that give God thanks?

Immediately the organ struck up for the *Te Deum*, up starts all my gentlemen, as if inspired from above, and from their talking together, not over-modestly, fall to praising God with the utmost precipitation, singing the heavenly anthems with all the grace and music imaginable.

In the middle of all this music and these exalted things, when I thought my soul elevated with Divine melody, and began to be reconciled to all the rest, I saw a little rustling motion among the people, as if they had been disturbed or frighted. Some said it thundered, some said the church shook; the true business was, the *Te Deum* within was answered without by the thunder of a hundred pieces of cannon and the noise of drums, with the huzzas and shouts of great crowds of people in the streets. This I did not understand, so it did neither disturb nor concern me; I found indeed no great harmony in it; it bore no consort in the music, at least as I understood it; but it was over pretty soon, and so we went on.

When the anthem was sung, and the other services succeeded them, I, that had been a little disturbed with the lucid intervals of the choristers and the gentlemen that sat crowded in with them, turned my eyes to other places, in hopes I should find some saints among the crowd, whose souls were taken up with the exalted raptures of the day.

But, alas! it was all one, the ladies were busy singling out the men and the men the ladies. The star and garter of a fine young nobleman — beautiful

in person, rich in habit, and sparkling in jewels, his blue ribbon intimating his character — drew the eyes of so many women off their prayer-books, that I think his grace ought to have been spoken to by the vergers to have withdrawn out of the church, that he might not injure the service, and rob God Almighty of the homage of the day.

As for the queen, her majesty was the star of the day, and infinitely more eyes were directed to her than were lifted up to heaven, though the last was the business of the whole procession.

Well, said I, this is mighty fine, that 's true ; but where 's the religion of all this ? Heavens bless me, said I, out of this crowd, and I 'll never mock God any more here when the queen comes again. Cannot these people go and see the queen where the queen is to be seen, but must they come hither to profane the church with her, and make the queen an idol ? And in a great passion I was, both at the people and at the manner of the day, as you may easily see by what follows.

N.B. — I had made some other satirical reflections upon the conduct of the day ; but as it looks too near home, I am not willing that poor Robinson Crusoe should disoblige anybody.

I confess, the close of the day was still more extravagant ; for there the thanksgiving was adjourned from the church to the tavern, and to the street ; and instead of the decency of a religious triumph, there was indeed a triumph of religious indecency ; and the anthems, *Te Deum*, and thanksgiving of the day ended in the drunkenness, the bonfires, and the squibs and crackers of the street.

How far religion is concerned in all this, or whether God Almighty will accept of these noisy doings for thanksgivings, that I have nothing to

do with; let those people consider of it that are concerned in it.

OF DIFFERENCES IN RELIGION

'T is known alone to the Divine Wisdom why He has been pleased to suffer any part of religion, and the adoration paid to His majesty, the supplications made to Him, and the homage which His creatures owe to His glorious being, to be so doubtfully directed, or so differently understood by His creatures, as that there should be any mistakes or disagreements about them.

How comes it to pass, that the paying a reverence to the name and being of God should not be as incapable of being disputed in the manner of it as in the thing itself? That all the rules of worshipping, believing in, and serving the great God of heaven and earth, should be capable of being understood any more than one way? And that the infallible Spirit of God, who is our guide to heaven, should leave any one of its dictates in a state of being misunderstood?

Why have not the rules of religion, as well those of doctrine as of life, been laid down in terms so plain, and so impossible to be mistaken, that all men in the world, in every age, should have the same notions of them, and understand them, in every tittle of them, exactly alike? Then as heaven is but one blessed great port, at which all hope to arrive, there would have been but one road to travel the journey in; all men would have gone the same way, steered the same course; and brethren would no more have fallen out by the way.

God alone, for wise and righteous reasons, because He can do nothing but what is wise and righteous, has otherwise ordered it, and that is all we can say

of it; as to the reason and justice of it, that is a thing of which, like as of the times and of the seasons, we may say, knoweth no man.

In the state of uncertainty we are now in, so it is; two men, believing in the same God, holding the same faith, the same Saviour, the same doctrine, and aiming at the same heaven, yet cannot agree to go to that heaven, or worship that God, or believe in that Saviour, the same way, or after the same manner; nay, they cannot know, or conceive of God, or of heaven, or of the Redeemer, or indeed of any one principle of the Christian religion, in the same manner, or form the same ideas of those things in their minds.

It is true, the different capacities and faculties of men are in part a reason for this, by which it is occasioned, that scarce two men together have the same notions and apprehensions even of one and the same thing, because their understandings are led by different guides, and they see by different lights.

But this is not all; they are not alike honest to the light they have. Three men read the same doctrinal article, say it be of the Trinity, or of any other, and they all examine the foundation of it in the Scripture; one thinks verily he has found out the mystery effectually, goes on with his inquiries, and brings every Scripture and every passage to correspond exactly with his first notion, and thus he confirms himself immovably in his opinion; and it is so clear to him, that he can not only never be argued out of it, but can entertain no good opinion of any man that conceives of it in any other way, but takes him for an enemy to the orthodox doctrine, and that he merits to be expelled out of Christ's Church, denied the Christian communion, and, in short, treats him with no respect, no, nor thinks of him with charity.

Another comes to the same Scripture, and in quest

of the same doctrine, and he reads over the same texts, and receives notions from them directly opposite to the other, or, at least, very remote from them; he follows in his search through all the corroborating texts and is confirmed in his first opinion from them all; he grows as immovable in his received construction of the Scripture as the other, and all is so clear to him, that he not only can never be argued out of his opinion, but can entertain no good opinion of any man that conceives of it any other way, but takes him for an enemy to the orthodox doctrine.

The third man, he reads over all the same texts of Scripture, but doing it with an indifferency as to the substance, and whether he receives right information or no, truly he comes away with a calmness of mind as to the substance; and as he went with no great concern about being certain, so he comes back as uncertain as he went.

These three men are enough to fill the whole world full of disputes about religion. The first two meet, and being equally positive of their being infallibly guided, equally warm in defending their opinions, and equally tenacious of them, and above all, equally void of charity to the other, truly they fall out, part, condemn, censure, revile, and as opportunity and power offers, at last persecute one another, and all one another's adherents.

The third, half informed, indifferent man, he comes in between these two, laughs at them both, says they are a parcel of furious Christians, that the thing is not absolutely necessary to be known, that it is no article of faith, so as that without deciding it a man cannot be saved; says they are a parcel of fools to fall out thus about what they cannot be certain of, and which they may go to heaven though they should not understand it till they come there; and thus the world comes to be divided.

Could they differ with humility, they would differ with charity, but it is not to be in religion, whatever it may be in civil or politic affairs; for there is a thing called zeal, which men call a grace in religion, and esteem a duty, and this makes men fall out in religious matters with a more fatal warmth and more animosity than in other cases, according to Hudibras —

> Zeal makes men fight, like mad or drunk,
> For Dame Religion as for punk.

Nor is this the fate only of the Christian religion, though 't is more so there than in any other, but 't is the same in other cases, as between the Persians and the Turks about the successors of their prophet Mahomet. It was so of old between the heathen and the Jews; and the Assyrian monarch prepared a fiery furnace for those that would not fall down and worship the great image that he had set up.

In the primitive times of God's Church, the heathen did the like by the Christians, and *Christianos ad leones* was the common cry; but when the Church came to its halcyon days, Constantine the Great gave peace to the Christians, and it was but a little while that they enjoyed that peace before they fell out by the way. The Arian heresies rose up, and differing opinions rent the State into factions, the Church into schisms, and in the space of two reigns the Arians persecuted the orthodox, and the orthodox the Arians, almost with the same fury as the heathen had persecuted them both with before.

From thence to our time persecution has been the practice even of all parties, as they have been clothed with power, and as their differences have moved them; for example, in all the Christian countries, there is a mortal feud between Popish and the

Protestant; and though, indeed, the former have carried their zeal farthest, yet the latter have not been able to say they have not persecuted in their turn, though not with fire and faggot.

What wars and bloodshed molested Europe on the account of religion in Germany! Especially till the general pacification of those troubles at the treaty of Westphalia, when the Protestants, having had the apparent advantage of the war, obtained the everlasting settlement of their religion as well as liberties through the whole empire.

Since those times, what persecution, in the same country, between the Lutheran and Calvinist churches, and how little charity is among them, insomuch that the Lutherans to this day will not allow the Reformed Evangelic churches, so the Calvinists are called, liberty to assemble for worship within the gates of their cities, or give them Christian burial.

I avoid looking too near home, or searching in Scotland and England, among the unhappy divisions of Episcopal and Presbyterian, Church of England and Dissenter, and this I do because it is at home; but it is too evident that all these come either from men's being negligent of right informations, or too tenacious when they have it; for it is evident, if all men would be honest to the light they have, and favourable to their neighbours, we might hope that, how many several ways soever we chose to walk towards heaven, we should all meet there at last.

I look upon all the seeds of religious dissension as tares sowed by the devil among the wheat; and it may be observed, that though, as I have already said, the Assyrians persecuted the Jews, and the Romans the Christians, yet where the devil is immediately and personally worshipped, there we meet with little or no persecution; for Satan, having a

kind of peaceable dominion there, offers them no disturbance; he desires no innovation for ever; he finds the sweetness of it, and lets it all alone.

But if once they talk of other gods before him, he is far less easy; there he is continually sowing strife and hatching divisions among them, for, like all other monarchs, the devil loves to reign alone.

It would be too long a task here to reckon up the several sorts of differences in religion even among us in England, where, if two happen to differ, presently, like St. Paul to St. Peter, they withstand one another to the face; that is to say, carry on the dispute to the utmost extremity.

But there is another question before me, and that is not only why there are such differences on the point of religion, and why are religious differences hotter and more irreconcilable than other breaches, but why are there more differences of this kind among us than among any other nation in the world?

Certainly this pushing on our religious broils to the extremity is the peculiar of this country of England, and is not the same thing in other places; and the variety is such here, that 't is said there are more several communions or communities of religious kinds in England than in all the other Protestant countries in the world.

The best and most charitable answer that I can think of to give for this is to compliment ourselves, and say, 't is because we are the most religious nation in the world; that is to say, that we in general set more seriously to work to inquire into the substance and nature of religion; to examine principles, and weigh the reasons of things, than other people, being more concerned for and anxious about the affairs of God, of heaven, and our souls; that thinking, as we ought to do, that religion is of the utmost concern

to us, and that it is of the last moment to us to be certain about it and well-grounded in the points before us, particularly whether we are rightly informed or not. This anxious concern makes us jealous of every opinion and tenacious of our own, breaks much in upon the custom of submitting our judgments to the clergy, as is the case in countries where people are more indifferent in their search after these things, and more unconcerned in the certainty or uncertainty of them.

I must acknowledge that I think the true and the only just reason that can be given for this matter, is not that we are more furious than other people, more censorious and rash in our judgment, that we have less charity, or less patience, in debating religious points than other people; but the truth is, that we have less indifference about them, and cannot sit down contented with a slight and overly inquiry, or a cursory or school answer to the doubts in question; but we make it a thing of absolute necessity to be fully informed of, and therefore, are earnest in the inquiry, and knowing the Scripture to be the great rule of faith, the standard for life and doctrine, we fly thither and search for ourselves, not having Popery enough to expect an infallible judge, not indifference enough to acquiesce in the judgment of the clergy, and perhaps a little too tenacious of our own interpretation even in things we are uninstructed about.

This, indeed, I take to be the true reason why religious disputes increase so much here, and why there are such separations and schisms among us, more than there are in any other nation in the world.

I know much of it is laid to the door of the confusions they were all in here during the bloody intestine wars in the years 1640 to 1656, and the

liberty given to all opinions to set up themselves at that time; but I waive that as a question that tends to more division. I believe the reason I have given for it stands as well grounded, and as likely to be approved, as any I can give, or as any that has been given in this case.

There is another difficult question which still remains before us, and that is, what remedy can we apply to this malady? And first, I must answer negatively, not to have us be less religious, that we might differ less about it, but to have us exercise more charity in our disputes, that we might differ more like men of temper, and more like Christians than we do. This is striking at the root of religious differences; for if they were carried on mildly, with a peaceable spirit, willing to be informed, a disposition to love as brethren, though in everything not like-minded — our variety of opinions would not then have the name of differences, we should not separate in communion and in charity, though we did not agree in everything we were to believe or not to believe about religion.

It is hard that we should say these differences are the consequences of a nation having more religion than their neighbours, since we have still this one part too little; and as I suppose us to have more religion, I must be obliged to grant we have not enough more; for if, as we have just so much more religion as is sufficient to make us quarrelsome in religious disputes, we had yet as much more as were sufficient to make us peaceable again after it, then we should be religious to purpose.

So that, in a word, our being so religious as above is only an unhappy middle composition between the inquiring and fully-informed Christian on one hand, and the careless, indifferent, unconcerned temper that takes up with anything on the other hand.

And this I take to be a just though short account of our differences in England about religion.

It might be a very useful question to start here, namely, where will all our unhappy differences end? I, that am not willing to give the worst-natured answer, where the best and kindest will hold water, am for the present disposed to answer in general, rather than descend to particulars, viz., in heaven. There all our unkind, unchristian, unneighbourly, unbrotherly differences will end. We shall freely shake hands there with many a pardoned sinner that here we bid stand off; embrace many a publican that here we think it a dishonour to converse with; see many a heart that we have broken here, with censures, reproachings, and revilings, made whole again by the balm of the same Redeemer's blood.

There we shall see that there have been other flocks than those of our fold, other paths to heaven than those we shut men out from; that those we have excommunicated have been taken into that superior communion; and those we have placed at our left hand have been there summoned to the right hand; all separations will be there taken away, and the mind of every Christian be entirely reconciled to one another; no divisions, no differences, no charging sincere minds with hypocrisy, or embracing painted hypocrites for saints; everything to be seen and to be known as it really is, and by a clear light; none will desire to deceive, none be subject to be deceived.

There we shall look upon all we have done and said in prejudice of the character of our brethren with a just change, and sufficiently repair to one another all the injurious things we have said, or indeed but thought, of one another, by rejoicing in the common felicity and praising the Sovereign Glory that had received those we had foolishly rejected, and let those into the same heaven whom we had, in

the abundance of our pride and the penury of our charity, shut out.

How many actions of men which we, seeing only their outside, have now censured, shall we find there by that penetration that cannot err, be accepted for their inside sincerity? How many an opinion that we condemn here shall we see then to be orthodox? In a word, how many contradicting notions and principles which we thought inconsistent with true religion shall we find then to be reconcilable to themselves, to one another, and to the fountain of truth?

All the difficulties in our conceptions of things invisible will then be explained; all the doctrines of the immutability of the Divine counsels will then be reconcilable to the changeable events of things, and to the varieties often happening in the world. The unchangeableness of the Eternal decrees will then appear; and yet the efficacy of praying to God to do this, or not do that, to pardon, forgive, spare, and forbear, which we now say is inconsistent with those unchangeable decrees, shall be reconcilable to that unchangeableness in a manner to us now inconceivable.

And this is the foundation of what I now advance, viz., that in heaven all our differences in religion will be reconciled, and will be at an end. If any man ask me whether they cannot be ended before, I answer, if we were all thoroughly convinced that they would be reconciled then, we should certainly put an end to them before; but it is impossible to be done. Men's convictions of the greatest and most certain truths are not equal to one another, or equal to the weight and significancy of those truths; and therefore such a general effect of this affair cannot be expected on this side of time.

There is one very great reconciler of religious dif-

ferences in this world, which has sometimes been made use of by Providence to heal the breaches in Christian charity among religious people, and it is, generally speaking, very effectual; but it is a bitter draught, a potion that goes down with great reluctance, and that is persecution. This generally reconciles the differences of Christians about the lesser matters in religion. The primitive churches, while under the Roman persecutions, had a much greater harmony among themselves, and very few schisms and divisions broke out among them. When they did differ in any particular points, they wrote healing epistles to one another, contended with modesty and with charity, and referred willingly their notions to be decided by one another. They did not separate communion, and excommunicate whole churches and nations, for a dispute about the celebration of Easter, or unchurch one another for the question of receiving and rebaptizing of penitents, as was afterwards the case. The furnace of affliction burnt up all that dross, the fury of their persecutors kept their minds humble, their zeal for religion hot, and their affection for and charity to one another increased as their liberty and their number were lessened.

Thus Bishop Ridley and Bishop Hooper, the first a rigid Church of England bishop, the other almost a Presbyterian, or at least a Calvinist, like Peter and Paul, differed hotly, and withstood one another to the face in the very beginning of the Reformation; but when they came to burn for their religion, fire and faggot showed them the reconcilableness of all their disputes, convinced them that it was possible for both to hold fast the truth in sincerity and yet entertain differing notions of the rites and outsides of the Divine economy, and at the stake they ended all their disputes, wrote healing letters to one an-

other, and became fellow-martyrs and confessors for that very profession which was so intermixed with censure and dislike before.

And let all that think of this remedy remember that whenever these quarrelsome Christians come, by persecution or any other incident, to be thus reconciled in their charity, they find always a great deal to ask pardon of one another for with respect to what is past; all their violence, heat of zeal, and much more heat of passion, all their breach of charity, their reproaches and censures and hard words, which have passed between them, will only then serve to bring them together with more affection, and to embrace more warmly; for, depend upon it, all the differences in religion among good men (for I do not mean essential, doctrinal, and fundamental differences), serve only to make them all ashamed of themselves at last.

OF THE WONDERFUL EXCELLENCY OF NEGATIVE RELIGION AND NEGATIVE VIRTUE

Negative virtue sets out like the Pharisee with "God, I thank thee;" it is a piece of religious pageantry, a jointed baby dressed up gay, but, stripped of its gewgaws, it appears a naked lump, fit only to please children and deceive fools. 'T is the hope of the hypocrite, it is a cheat upon the neighbourhood, a dress for without doors, for 't is of no use within; 't is a mask put on for a character, and as generally it is used to cheat others, 't is so ignorantly embraced that we cheat even ourselves with it.

In a word, negative virtue is positive vice, at least when it is made use of in any of the two last cases; namely, either as a mask to deceive others, or as a mist to deceive ourselves. If a man were to look

back upon it to see in what part he could take up his nest, or lay a foundation of hope for the satisfaction of his mind as to future things, he would find it the most uncomfortable condition to go out of the world with that any man in the world can think.

The reason is plain; compare it with the publican, whom such a man despises. "Here is my landlord a drunkard, one of my tenants is a thief, such a poor man is a swearer, such a rich man a blasphemer, such a tradesman is a cheat, such a justice of the peace is an atheist, such a rakish fellow is turned highwayman, such a beau is debauched; but I — I that am clothed in negatives, and walk in the light of my own vanity — I live a sober, regular, retired life, I am an honest man; I defraud nobody; no man ever heard me swear, or an ill word come out of my mouth; I never talk irreligiously or profanely, and I am never missed out of my seat at church. God, I thank thee! I am not debauched, I am no highwayman, no murderer," &c. Now, what is the difference of all these? I must confess, speaking of all these together, and of what is usually the end of them, I think a man had better be any of them, nay, almost all of them together, than the man himself, and my reason is in a few words as follows.

All these know themselves to be wicked persons; conscience, though for a time oppressed and kept under, yet upon all occasions tells them plainly what their condition is, and oftentimes they repent. 'Tis true, sometimes they do not; God is pleased sometimes to treat them in the vindictive attribute, and they are cut off in their crimes, insensible and stupid, without a space or a heart to repent; and therefore let none take hope in their profligate living from what I am going to say.

Again, others, though they do repent, and God is

pleased to give them the grace to return to Him as penitents, come to it very late, and sometimes under a severe hand, as perhaps on a deathbed, or under some disaster, and oftentimes at the gallows.

But still, I say, those men, though they sin, they do it as a crime, and when they come to be told of it often they are brought to repent. But the negative Christian I speak of is so full of himself, so persuaded that he is good enough, and religious enough already, that he has no thoughts of anything unless it be to pull off his hat to God Almighty now and then, and thank Him that he has no need of Him. This is the opiate that doses his soul even to the last gasp; and it is ten thousand to one but the lethargic dream shoots him through the gulf at once, and he never opens his eyes till he arrives in that light where all things are naked and open; where he sees too late that he has been a cheat to himself, and has been hurried by his own pride in a cloud of negatives into a state of positive destruction without remedy.

I am reading no particular man's fate; God forbid! I restrain it to no circumstances, I point out no persons; it is too solemn a thing to make it a satire; 't is the state, not the man, I speak of. Let the guilty apply it to themselves, and the proud good man humble himself and avoid it.

I have observed that many fall into this case by the excessive vanity of being thought well of by their neighbours, obtaining a character, &c. It is a delusion very fatal to many; a good name is indeed a precious ointment, and in some cases is better than life. But with your pardon, Mr. Negative, it must be a good name for good deeds, or otherwise a good name upon a bad life is a painted whore, that has a gay countenance upon a rotten, diseased, corrupted carcass.

Much to be preferred is the general slander of a prejudiced age and a state of universal calumny, where the mind is free from the guilt they charge. Such a man, though the world spits upon and despises him, looks in with comfort, and looks up with hope.

——————— Hic murus aëneus esto,
Nil conscire sibi, nulla pallescere culpa. — HORACE.

General contempt, universal reproach, is a life that requires a world of courage and steadiness of mind to support; but be this my portion in this world, with a heart that does not reproach me with the guilt, much rather than to be a man of negatives only, and who all the world caresses with their good wishes and good opinion, but is himself empty of real virtue, a hypocrite at bottom, a cheat, and under the delusion of it; whose portion is with hypocrites, and who can neither look in, or look up, with pleasure, but must look without himself, for all that can be called good, either by others or by himself.

As at the great and last day the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, so I am persuaded the opinion we have of one another here, will be one of the things which will be there, and perhaps not till then fully rectified; and we shall be there thoroughly enlightened, we shall find room to see that we have been much mistaken in our notions of virtue and vice, religion and irreligion, in the characters of our neighbours. And I am persuaded we shall see many of our acquaintances placed at the right hand of a righteous Judge, whose characters we have oppressed with slanders, and who we have censoriously placed at His left hand here; and many a painted hypocrite, who has insulted his neighbour with, "Stand off, I am holier than thou," or whom he has turned

from with disdain, and with a "This publican!" placed at the left hand, who we made no doubt we should have seen at the right hand in triumph.

This is a support to the mind of a good man, even when his enemies, as David says, "gnash upon him with their teeth, and have him in derision," that is to say, when he is run down by universal clamour, and damned by the tongues of men, even for this world and another.

> Happy the man, who with exalted soul,
> Knows how to rate the great, the prosp'rous fool,
> Who can the insults of the street contemn,
> And values not the rage or tongues of men.
> He, like the sun, exists on his own flame,
> And, when he dies, is to himself a fame.

But take this with you as you go, that as negative praise will build no man comfort, so negative virtue will not support the mind under universal contempt. Scandal is much worse than slander; for the first is founded upon real guilt, the other attacks innocence. Nothing is a scandal, but what is true; nothing is a slander, but what is false.

He that fortifies himself against reproach, must do it with a certain reserve of real and solid virtue and piety; it must be uprightness and integrity that must preserve him; nothing but a fund of what is good can support the mind under the reproach of being all that is bad; I do not mean neither that the man must be perfect, have no follies or failings, have made no excursions, have nothing to be laid to the charge of his character; for where then shall the man be found I am speaking of? And I may be said to be describing the black swan, a person that is not, and never was to be found; but the right way of judging men, and the way which alone can be just, is to judge of them by their general conduct; and so a man may in his own mind justly

denominate himself: as every good action does not denominate me to be a good man, so neither does every failing, every folly, no, nor every scandalous action, denominate me a hypocrite, or a wicked man; otherwise some of the most eminent saints in Scripture, and of every age since the Scripture was written, are gone to the devil; and 't will be hard to say there was ever a good man in the world.

But I return to my subject, the negative good man; and let me examine him a little in his just character, in his conduct, public and private. He is no drunkard, but is intoxicated with the pride of his own worth; he is a good neighbour, a common arbitrator and peacemaker in other families, but a cursed tyrant in his own; he appears in a public place of worship for a show, but never enters into his closet and shuts the door about him, to pray to Him that sees in secret; he is covered with the vainglorious and ostentatious part of charity, but does all his alms before men, to be seen of them; he is mighty eager in the duties of the second table, but regardless of the first; appearingly religious to be seen and taken notice of by men; but between God and his own soul no intercourse, no communication. What is this man? and what comfort is there of the life he lives? He knows little, or perhaps nothing, of faith, repentance, and a Christian mortified life; in a word, he is a man perfect in the circumstances of religion, and perfectly a stranger to the essential part of religion.

Take this man's conversation apart, enter into the private and retired part of it, what notions has he of misspent hours, and of the natural reflux of all our minutes, on to the great centre and gulf of life, eternity? Does he know how to put a right value upon time? Does he esteem it the life-blood of his soul, as it really is, and act in all the moments of it,

as one that must account for them? Alas! this is of no weight with such a man; he is too full of himself to enter into any notions about an account, either for misspent time, or anything else misdone; but persuading himself that he never did anything amiss, entertains no notion of judgment to come, eternity, or anything in it.

What room has a man to expiate, in his thoughts upon so immense and inconceivable a subject as that of eternal duration, whose thoughts are all taken up, and swelled top-full with his own extraordinary self? It would be impossible for any man in the world to entertain one proud thought of himself, if he had but one right idea of a future state. Could such a man think that anything in him, or anything he could do, could purchase for him a felicity that was to last to eternity? What! that a man should be capable in one moment (for life is not that in length compared to eternity) to do anything for which he should deserve to be made happy to eternity?

If, then, you can form no equality between what he can do and what he shall receive, less can it be founded upon his negative virtue, or what he has forborne to do; and if neither his negative nor his positive piety can be equal to the reward, and to the eternity that reward is to last for, what then is become of the Pharisee? he must think no more of himself, for all his boasts; neither of his negatives nor his positives, but of a rich unbounded grace, that rewards according to itself, not according to what we can do; and that to be judged at the last day according to our works, if literally understood, would be to be undone; but we are to be judged by the sincerity of our repentance, to be rewarded according to the infinite grace of God, and purchase of Christ, with a state of blessedness to an endless eternity.

Indeed this eternity is not a meditation suitable

to the man I am talking of; 't is a sublime thought, which his bloated imagination has never descended to or engaged in; and when it comes he is like to have as little comfort of it as he has had thought about it.

This thought of eternity raises new ideas in my mind, and I cannot go forward without a digression upon so important a subject; if the reader approves the thought, he will not quarrel about its being a digression.

ETERNITY

Hail! mighty circle, unconceived abyss,
Centre of worlds to come, and grave of this;
Great gulf of Nature, in whose mighty womb,
Lies all that thing called Past, that nothing called To come.

Ever and never, both begun in thee,
The weak description of eternity,
Mere sounds which only can thy being confess;
For how should finite words thee infinite express?
Thou art duration's modern name,
To be, or to have been, in thee are all the same.

Thy circle holds the pre-existent state
Of all that 's early, or that shall be late.
Thou know'st no past or future; all in thee,
Make up one point, Eternity:
And, if things mortal measure things sublime,
Are all one great ubiquity of time.

To end, begin, be born, and die,
The accidents of time and life,
Are nonsense in thy speech, Eternity
Swallows them all, in thee they end their strife.
In thee the ends of Nature form one line,
And generation with corruption join.

Ages of life describe thy state in vain,
Even death itself, in thee, lives o'er again.
Thy radiant, bright, unfaded face,
Shines over universal space.
All limits from thy vast extent must flee,
Old everlasting 's but a point to thee,
Ten everlastings make not one Eternity.

To thee things past exist as things that are;
And things to come, as if they were;
Thou wast the first great when, while there was yet no where.
Even time itself 's a little ball of space,
Borrowing a flame from thy illustrious face,
Which, wheeling round, in its own circle burns,
Rolls out from thy first spring, and into thee returns.

What we have been, and what we are,
The present and the time that 's past,
We can resolve to nothing here,
But what we are to be in thee at last.

Deeds soon shall die, however nobly done,
And thoughts of men, like as themselves decay;
But time when to eternity roll'd on,
Shall never, never, never waste away.

Years, ages, months, weeks, days, and hours
Wear out, and words to number them shall fail,
One endless all the wild account devours,
And thy vast unit casts up all the tale.
Numbers as far as numbers run
Are all in thy account but one,
Or rather are thy reck'ning just begun.

Thou art the life of immortality,
When time itself drowns and expires in thee.
All the great actions of aspiring men,
By which they build that trifling thing called fame,
In thy embrace lose all their where and when,
Reserving not so much as a mere empty name.

How vain are sorrows of a human state,
Why mourn th' afflicted at their fate?
One point, one moment 's longer far
Than all their days of sorrow shall appear,
When wrapt in wonders we shall see,
And measure their extent by thee.

In vain are glorious monuments of fame,
Which fools erect t' immortalise a name,
Not half a moment when compared with thee,
Lives all their fancied immortality.

Start back, my soul! and with some horror view,
If with these eyes thou can'st look through,
Inquire what gives the pain of loss a sting,
Even hell itself 's a hell, in no one other thing.

Then with a brightness on thy face,
An emanation from that glorious place,
A joy which no dark cloud can overcast,
And which Eternity itself cannot outlast,
Reflect, my soul! Duration dwells on high,
And heaven itself's made heaven, by blest Eternity.

But to the purpose in hand, for I have not done with this man of negatives yet. And now let us bring him more nearly and seriously to a converse with the invisible world. He looks into it with horror and dreadful apprehensions, as Felix, when St. Paul reasoned of temperance, righteousness, and of judgment to come. Felix was a moral heathen, that is to say, a man of negatives, like him I am speaking of. What was then the case? He trembled. Pray, what is it reasonable to think Felix trembled at? If I may give my opinion, who am but a very mean expositor of texts, it was this or something like it.

Felix was a philosopher as well as a man of power; and by his wisdom, as also by his reverence of the gods, which at that time was the sum of religion, had been a man of morals, a man that had practised temperance and righteousness, as the life which was unquestionably to be rewarded by the powers above with an Elysian felicity, that is to say, according to the Roman maxim, that the gods were the rewarders of virtue.

But when the blessed Apostle came to reason with Felix how unlikely it was that these negatives should purchase our happiness hereafter, he showed him that the gods could not be in debt to us for the practice of virtue, which was indeed no more than living most suitable to our reason; that a life of virtue and temperance was its own reward, by giving a healthy body, a clear head, a composed life, &c., fitting the man for all other worldly enjoyments

adequate to his reason and his present felicity as a man. But eternal happiness must come from another spring, namely, from the infinite, unbounded grace of a provoked God, who having erected a righteous tribunal, where every heart should be searched, and where every tongue would confess itself guilty, and stand self-condemned. Jesus Christ, whom Paul preached, would separate such as by faith and repentance He had brought home and united to Himself by the grace of adoption, and on the foot of His having laid down His life a ransom for them, had appointed them to salvation.

When poor negative Felix heard of this, and that all his philosophy, his temperance, and righteousness, if it had been ten thousand times as great, would weigh nothing and plead nothing for him at that judicature, and that he began to see the justice and reason of this, for Paul reasoned him into it; I say, when he saw this, he trembled indeed, as well he might, and as all negative people will.

What a strange idea must that Pharisee have of God, who went up with the publican to the temple to pray. 'T is observable he went with a good stock of assurance in his face that could come to the altar as he did, not to offer any sacrifice; we do not find he carried any offering, or bespoke the priest to make any atonement; he wanted no priests to make any confession to. Good man, as he thought he was, he had no sins to confess; he rather came up to the altar to even accounts with heaven, and like the other man in the Gospel, tell God that he had fulfilled the whole law, and had done all those things that were commanded, even from his youth; so, as before, he only pulled off his hat to his God, and let Him know that there was nothing between them at present, and away he goes about his business.

But the poor wretch whom he despised, and whom

he had left behind him, for he durst come no further, acted quite another part. He had at first, indeed, in sense of his duty, resolved to go up to the temple; but when he saw the splendour and majesty of God represented by the glory of that elevated building, I say, when he saw that, though a great way off, and then looked into his own heart, all his negative confidences failing him, and a sense of miserable circumstances coming upon him, he stops short, and with a blow of reflection, and perfectly unmixed with any of the Pharisee's pride, he looks down in humility, but lifts up his heart in a penitential faith, with a "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner."

Here was faith, repentance, duty, and confession, all conjoined in one act, and the man's work was done at once, he went away justified. When the negative Pharisee went home, the self-same vain wretch that he came out, with "God, I thank thee," in his mouth, and a mass of pride in his heart, that nothing could convince.

In what glorious colours do the Scriptures upon all occasions represent those two hand-in-hand graces, faith and repentance! There is not one mention of faith in the whole Scripture but what is recommending some way or other to our admiration and to our practice; 't is the foundation and the top-stone of all religion, the right hand to lead and the left hand to support, in the whole journey of a Christian, even through this world and into the next. In a word, 't is the sum and substance of the Gospel foundation.

Religion seems to have been founded upon three establishments in the world, in all which the terms of life are laid down at the end of our acceptance of it.

The first establishment was with Adam in Paradise; the terms of which were, "Forbear and live."

The second establishment was with the children of Israel, in the giving of the Law; the terms of which were, "Do and live."

The third establishment is that of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; the terms of which are, "Believe and live."

So that, in a word, faith is the substance and fulfilling of Gospel religion, the plan of righteousness, and the great efficient of eternal life. Let me break out here upon this glorious subject, and pardon the excursion, I entreat you.

FAITH

Hail! mystic, realising vision, hail!
Heaven's duplicate, eternity's entail;
God's representative to hand us on,
And for us claim a station near His throne.

Not the eternal battlements of brass,
Gates, a whole hell of devils could never pass;
Not angels, not the bright seraphic train,
Which drove out Adam from the sacred plain;
Not all the flaming swords Heaven ever drew,
Shall shut thee out, or intercept thy view.

Boldly thou scal'st the adamantine wall,
Where heaps of fainting suppliants fall,
Where doubt has thousands and ten thousands slain,
And hypocrites knock hard in vain.

Soaring above the dark abyss of fear,
Quite out of sight, behind thou leav'st despair,
Who fainting, and unable to keep pace,
Gives up the prize, gives out the race,
Faints by the way, and fainting cries,
I can't, and so for fear of dying, dies.

While thou, on air of hope, fanning thy wings,
With gentle gales of joy, from whence assurance springs,
Mount'st on, and passing all th' æthereal bounds,
Thy head with beatific rapture crowns.

Great pilot of the soul, who goes before
The dangers of the dreadful voyage t' explore,

Enters the very place, and when 't is there,
Sends back expresses to support us here,
Negotiates peace, gains the great pledge of love,
And gets it ratified above.

With awful confidence at Heaven's high throne,
It rather humbly claims than merely prays.
Pleads, promises, and calls them all its own,
And trusts to have, even then, when Heaven denies.

On earth what wonders has it wrought!
Rather what wonders has it not?
It has parted rivers, dried up seas,
Made hills of those, and walls of these.
And if to this great mountain it should say,
"Move off, O hill, and roll to yonder sea,"
The sea and mountain, too, must both obey.
If towards heaven it looks, 't is ne'er in vain,
From thence 't has brought down fire, 't has brought down rain,
And thither it ascends in flame again.

Its influence is so vigorous and intense,
It pierces all the negatives of sense.
Things quite invisible to sight it sees,
Things difficult performs with ease:
Things imperceptible to us it knows,
Things utterly impossible it does:
Things unintelligible it understands,
Things high (superior to itself) commands,
Things in themselves unnatural reconciles,
Weakness to strength, and to its sorrows smiles,
Hopes against hope, and in despair 's resigned,
And spite of storms without, it calms the mind.

Say, unborn lamp, what feeds thy flame,
In all varieties the same?
What wonder-working hand thy power supplies?
Nature and reason's just surprise.

Nature and reason join thee hand in hand,
And to thy just dominion stoop the mind:
But neither can thy workings understand,
And in thy swifter pace thou leav'st them both behind.
'T was from thy motion fortified by thee,
Peter asked leave to walk upon the sea,
When his great Lord said, "Come," and Faith said, "Go,"
What heart could fear? What coward tongue say, no?
Boldly he stept upon the flowing wave,
And might have marched through fire or through the grave,
While He stood by who had the power to save.

But soon as Peter lost his hold of thee,
He sunk like lead into the sea.
All thy magnetic power disperst and gone,
The heavenly charm was broke, and Peter quite undone;
And had not help been just at hand,
Peter had gone the nearest way to land.

Made up of wonders, and on wonders fixed,
Of contradicting qualities thou 'rt mixed.
Small as a grain, yet as a mountain great,
A child in growth, yet as a giant strong;
A beggar, yet above a king in state:
Of birth but short, yet in duration long.
How shall we reconcile thee to our sense?
Here thou would'st pass for mere impertinence.
Thy teasing nature would thy end defeat,
So humble, and yet so importunate.

See the great test of faith, the greatest sure,
That Heaven e'er put a mortal to endure.
She cried, she begged, nay, she believed and prayed,
Yet long neglected, and as long denied;
At last, as if commanded to despair,
She 's almost told it was not in His power,
That she was out of His commission placed,
Shut out by Heaven, by race accurst.
Woman! I am not sent to thee!
Woman! thou hast no share in Me!
Was ever creature born, but this, could hear
Such words proclaimed from Heaven and not despair?

But still she prays, adheres, petitions, cries,
And on the Hand that thrusts her back relies:
Till moved, as 't were, with her impertinence,
He calls her dog, and challenges her sense,
To tell her whether such as she are fed,
With food appropriate, or the household bread.

But all was one; her faith so often tried,
Too strong to fail, too firm to be denied:
She follows still, allows her outcast state,
The more thrust off, the more importunate:
Every repulse she meets, revives her prayer.
And she builds hope because she 's bid despair;
He call her dog, she calls herself so too,
But pleads as such the fragments that are due.
The case so doubtful, the repulse so long,
Her sex so weak, and yet her faith so strong,
Heaven yields! The victory of faith 's obtained,
And all she asked, and all she sought for, gained.

Mysterious flame! tell us from whence
Thou draw'st that cleaving confidence,
That strange, that irresistible desire.
That with such magic force sets all the soul on fire;
By which thou can'st to Heaven itself apply,
In terms which Heaven itself cannot deny.

A power so great, an influence so sure,
Not Heaven itself the wrestlings can endure.
See how the struggling angel yields the day,
When Jacob's faith bids Jacob pray.
Let me alone, the heavenly vision cries.
No, no, says conquering faith, never without my prize.
Heaven yields! Victorious faith prevailed,
And all the blessings asked for he entailed.

Blest humble confidence, that finds the way
To know we shall be heard before we pray;
Heav'n's high insurance-office, where we give
The premium faith, and then the grant receive.

Stupendous gift! from what strange spring below,
Can such a supernatural product flow?
From Heaven, and Heaven alone it must derive;
For Heaven alone can keep its flame alive.

No spring below can send out such a stream,
No fire below emit so bright a flame,
Of nature and original divine,
It does all other gifts of Heaven outshine.

Thou art the touchstone of all other grace,
No counterfeits can keep thy pace.
The weighty standard of our best desires,
The true sublime, which every breast inspires,
By thee we rise to such a height of flame,
As neither thought can reach nor language name,
Such as St. Paul himself could hardly know,
Whether he really was alive or no:
When clothed in raptures lifted up by thee,
He saw by faith, what none without it see.

Just Heaven, that in thy violence delights,
And easily distinguishes thy flights
From the thin outside warmth of hypocrites,
Approves, accepts, rewards, and feeds thy flame,
And gives this glorious witness to thy fame,
That all our gifts are hallowed by thy name.

By thee our souls on wings of joy ascend,
Climb the third heaven, an entrance there demand,

As sure those gates to thee shall open wide,
As without thee we 're sure to be denied.
No bars, no bolts, no flaming swords appear,
To shock thy confidence, or move thy fear.

To thee the patent passage always free,
Peter himself received the keys from thee;
Or, which we may conceive with much more ease,
Thou art thyself the gate, thyself the keys.

Thine was the fiery chariot, thine the steeds,
That fetched Elijah from old Jordan's plains;
Such a long journey such a voiture needs,
And thou the steady coachman held the reins.

Thine was the wondrous mantle he threw down,
By which successive miracles were wrought;
For 't was the prophet's faith, and not his gown,
Elisha so importunately sought.

Bright pole-star of the soul, for ever fixed,
The mind's sure guide, when anxious and perplexed;
When wandering in the abyss of thoughts and cares,
Where no way out and no way in appears;
When doubt and horror, the extremes of fear,
Surround the soul, and prompt her to despair.

Thou shin'st aloft, open'st a gleam of light,
And show'st all heaven to our sight;
Thou gild'st the soul with sudden smiles, and joy,
And peace, that hell itself can ne'er destroy.

If all this be to be said, and all indeed but a poetical trifle upon this exalted subject, what is become of our negative Christian in all this? There is not a word of negative religion in all the description of faith, any more than there is of faith in all our negative religion.

Now let us follow this poor negative wretch to his deathbed; and there having very little other notion of religion — for 't is the fate of those that trust to their negatives to have little else in their thoughts — if a good man come to talk with him, if he talks out of that way he puts him all into confusion; for if he cannot swim upon the bladders

of his negatives he drowns immediately, or he buoys himself up above your reproofs, and goes on as before. He is a little like the Polish Captain Uratz, who was executed for the murder of Mr. Thynne, who, when they talked to him of repentance and of Jesus Christ, said he was of such and such a family, and he hoped God would have some respect to him as a gentleman.

But what must a poor minister do who, being filled with better principles, prays for this vainglorious man? Must he say, "Lord, accept this good man, for he has been no drunkard, no swearer, no debauched person; he has been a just, a charitable man, has done a great deal of good among his neighbours, and never wilfully wronged any man; he has not been so wicked as it is the custom of the times to be, nor has he shown bad examples to others; Lord, be merciful to this excellent good man"?

No, no, the poor sincere minister knows better things; and if he prays with him, he turns him quite inside out, represents him as a poor mistaken creature, who now sees that he is nothing, and has nothing in himself, but casts himself entirely, as a miserable lost sinner, into the arms of a most merciful Saviour, praying to be accepted on the merits of Jesus Christ, and no other; so that there is all his negative bottom unravelled at once; and if this is not his case it must be worse.

CHAPTER FIVE

OF LISTENING TO THE VOICE OF PROVIDENCE

WE are naturally backward to inform ourselves of our duty to our Maker and to ourselves; it is a study we engage in with great reluctance, and it is but too agreeable to us, when we meet with any difficulty which we think gives us a just occasion to throw off any farther inquiries of that kind.

Hence I observe the wisest of men often run into mistakes about the things which, speaking of religion, we call duty, taking up slight notions of them, and believing they understand enough of them, by which they rob themselves of the advantages as well as comfort of a farther search; or, on the other hand, taking up with the general knowledge of religious principles, and the common duties of a Christian life, are satisfied with knowing what they say is sufficient to carry them to heaven, without inquiring into those things which are helpful and assistant to make that strait path easy and pleasant to themselves, and to make them useful to others by the way.

Solomon was quite of another opinion, when he bid us cry after knowledge, and lift up our voice for understanding — dig for her as for silver, and search for her as for hid treasure. It is certain here that he meant religious knowledge, and it is explained in the very next words, with an encouraging promise to those that shall enter upon the search, viz., Then

shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.

I am of opinion that it is our unquestioned duty to inquire after everything in our journey to the eternal habitation which God has permitted us to know, and thus to raise difficulties in the way of our just search into Divine discoveries, is to act like Solomon's sluggard, who saith, "There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets" (Prov. xxii. 13). That is, he sits down in his ignorance, repulsed with imaginary difficulties, without making one step in the search after the knowledge which he ought to dig for as for hid treasure.

Let us, then, be encouraged to our duty; let us boldly inquire after everything that God has permitted us to know. I grant that secret things belong to God, and I shall labour to keep my due distance; but I firmly believe that there are no secret things belonging to God, and which as such we are forbidden to inquire into, but what also are so preserved in secrecy that by all our inquiries we cannot arrive at the knowledge of them; and it is a most merciful, as well as wise dispensation, that we are only forbid inquiring after those things which we cannot know, and that all those things are effectually locked up from our knowledge which we are forbidden to inquire into. The case is better with us than it was with Adam. We have not the tree of knowledge first planted in our view, as it were tempting us with its beauty, and within our reach, and then a prohibition upon pain of death; but blessed be God, we may eat of all the trees in the garden, and all those of which we are not allowed to take are placed both out of our sight and out of our reach.

I am making way here to one of the trees of sacred knowledge, which, though it may grow in the thick-

est of the wood, and be surrounded with some briars and thorns, so as to place it a little out of sight, yet I hope to prove that it is our duty to taste of it, and that the way to come at it is both practicable and plain.

But to waive the allegory, as I am entering into the nicest search of Divine things that perhaps the whole scheme of religion directs us to, it is absolutely necessary at our entrance, if possible, to remove every difficulty, explain every principle, and lay down every foundation so undeniably clear, that nothing may appear dark or mysterious in our first conceptions of things — no stumbling-block lie at the threshold, and the humble reader may meet with no repulse from his own apprehensions of not understanding what he is going to read.

Listening to the voice of Providence is my subject; I am willing to suppose, in the first place, that I am writing to those who acknowledge the two grand principles upon which all religion depends. 1. That there is a God, a first great moving cause of all things, an eternal Power, prior, and consequently superior, to all power and being. 2. That this eternal Power, which I call God, is the Creator and Governor of all things, viz., of heaven and earth.

To avoid needless distinctions concerning which of the persons in the Godhead are exercised in the creating power, and which in the governing power, I offer that glorious text, Psalm xxxiii. 6, as a repulse to all such cavilling inquiries, where the whole Trinity is plainly entitled to the whole creating work: — "By the Word (God the Son) of the Lord (God the Father) were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath (God the Holy Ghost) of His mouth."

Having thus presupposed the belief of the being

and the creating work of God, and declared that I am writing to such only who are ready to own they believe that God is, and that He created the heaven and the earth, the sea and all that in them is, I think I need not make any preamble to introduce the following propositions, viz.:

1. That this eternal God guides by His providence the whole world, which He has created by His power.

2. That this Providence manifests a particular care over and concern in the governing and directing man, the best and last created creature on earth.

Natural religion proves the first, revealed religion proves the last of these beyond contradiction. Natural religion intimates the necessity of a Providence guiding and governing the world, from the consequence of the wisdom, justice, prescience, and goodness of the Creator.

It would be absurd to conceive of God exerting infinite power to create a world, and not concerning His wisdom, which is His providence, in guiding the operations of Nature, so as to preserve the order of His creation, and the obedience and subordination of consequences and causes throughout the course of that nature, which is in part the inferior life of that creation.

Revealed religion has given such a light into the care and concern of this Providence, in an especial manner, in and over that part of the creation called man, that we must likewise deny principles if we enter into disputes about it.

For him the peace of the creation is preserved, the climates made habitable, the creatures subjected and made nourishing, all vegetative life made medicinal; so that indeed the whole creation seems to be entailed upon him as an inheritance, and given to him for a possession, subjected to his authority, and

governed by him as viceroy to the King of all the earth; the management of it is given to him as tenant to the great Proprietor, who is Lord of the manor, or Landlord of the soil. And it cannot be conceived, without great inconsistency of thought, that this world is left entirely to man's conduct, without the supervising influence and the secret direction of the Creator.

This I call Providence, to which I give the whole power of guiding and directing of the creation, and managing of it, by man who is His deputy or substitute, and even the guiding, influencing, and overruling man himself also.

Let critical annotators enter into specific distinctions of Providence, and its way of acting, as they please, and as the formalities of the schoolmen direct; the short description I shall give of it is this, that it is that operation of the power, wisdom, justice, and goodness of God by which He influences, governs, and directs not only the means, but the events, of all things which concern us in this world.

I say it is that operation, let them call it what they will, which acts thus; I am no way concerned to show how it acts, or why it acts thus and thus in particular; we are to reverence its sovereignty, as it is the finger of God Himself, who is the Sovereign Director; and we are to observe its motions, obey its dictates, and listen to its voice, as it is, and because it is, particularly employed for our advantage.

It would be a very proper and useful observation here, and might take up much of this work, to illustrate the goodness of Providence, in that it is, as I say, particularly employed for the advantage of mankind. But as this is not the main design, and will come in naturally in every part of the work I am upon, I refer it to the common inferences, which are to be drawn from the particulars, as I go on.

It is, indeed, the most rational foundation of the whole design before me; it is therefore that we should listen to the voice of Providence, because it is principally determined, and determines all other things, for our advantage.

But I return to the main subject — the voice of Providence, the language or the meaning of Providence.

Nothing is more frequent than for us to mistake Providence, even in its most visible appearances; how easy, then, must it be to let its silent actings, which perhaps are the most pungent and significant, pass our observation.

I am aware of the error many fall into, who, determining the universal currency of events to Providence, and that not the minutest thing occurs in the course of life but by the particular destination of Heaven, by consequence entitle Providence to the efficiency of their own follies; as if a person presuming to smoke his pipe in a magazine of gunpowder should reproach Providence with blowing up the castle, for which indeed he ought to be hanged; or a man leaving his house or shop open in the night, should charge Providence with appointing him to be robbed, and the like. Nay, to carry it farther, every murderer or thief may allege Providence, that determines and directs everything, directed him to such wickedness; whereas Providence itself, notwithstanding the crimes of men, is actively concerned in no evil.

But I pass all these things; the subject I am treating upon is of another nature. The design here is to instruct us in some particular things relating to Providence and its government of men in the world, which it will be worth our while to observe, without inquiring how far it does or does not act in other methods.

There is, it is true, a difficulty to shake off all the wry steps which people take to amuse themselves about Providence, and for this reason I take so much pains at first to avoid them. Many men entitle Providence to things which it is not concerned about, speaking abstractedly; but, which is a much worse error, many also take no notice of those things which Providence particularly, and even in a very remarkable manner, distinguishes itself by its concern in.

If Providence guides the world, and directs the issues and events of things; if it commands causes and forms the connection of circumstances in the world, as no man that owns the principles mentioned above will deny; and, above all, if the general scope of Providence, and of the government of the world by its influence, be for our advantage, then it follows, necessarily, that it is our business and our interest to listen to its voice.

By listening to the voice of Providence, I mean to study its meaning in every circumstance of life, in every event; to learn to understand the end and design of Providence in everything that happens, what is the design of Providence in it respecting ourselves, and what our duty to do upon the particular occasion that offers. If a man were in danger of drowning in a shipwrecked vessel, and Providence presented a boat coming towards him, he would scarce want to be told that it was his business to make signals of distress, that the people in the said boat might not pass by ignorant of his condition, and give him no assistance; if he did, and omitted it, he would have little cause to concern Providence in his ruin.

There is certainly a rebellion against Providence, which Heaven itself will not always concern itself to overrule; and he that throws himself into a river to drown himself, he that hangs himself up to a beam, he that shoots himself into the head with a pistol,

shall die in spite of all the notions of decree, destiny, fate, or whatever we weakly call Providence; in such cases, Providence will not always concern itself to prevent it; and yet it is no impeachment of the sovereignty of Heaven in directing, decreeing, and governing all events in the world.

Providence decrees that events shall attend upon causes in a direct chain, and by an evident necessity, and has doubtless left many powers of good and evil seemingly to ourselves, and, as it were, in our hands, as the natural product of such causes and consequences, which we are not to limit and cannot expressly determine about, but which we are accountable for the good or evil application of; otherwise we were in vain exhorted and commanded to do any good thing, or to avoid any wicked one. Rewards and punishments would be incongruous with sovereign justice, and promises and threatenings be perfectly unmeaning, useless things—mankind being no free agent to himself, or intrusted with the necessary powers which those promises and threatenings imply.

But all these things are out of my present inquiry. I am for freely and entirely submitting all events to Providence; but not to be supinely and unconcernedly passive, as if there was nothing warning, instructing, or directing in the premonitions of God's providence, and which He expected we should take notice of, and take warning by. The "prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself." How does he foresee it, since it is not in man to direct himself? There are intimations given us, by which a prudent man may sometimes foresee evil and hide himself; and I must take these all out of the devil's hands if possible, and place Providence at the head of the invisible world, as well as at the helm of this world; and though I abhor superstitious and sceptical notions of the world of spirits, of which I pur-

pose to speak hereafter, either in this work or in some other by itself — I say, though I am not at all a sceptic, yet I cannot doubt but that the invisible hand of Providence, which guides and governs this world, does with a secret power likewise influence the world, and may, and I believe does, direct from thence silent messengers on many occasions — whether sleeping or waking, whether directly or indirectly, whether by hints, impulses, allegories, mysteries, or otherwise, we know not; and does think fit to give us such alarms, such previous and particular knowledge of things that, if listened to, might many ways be useful to the prudent man to foresee the evil, and hide himself.

The only objection, and which I can see no method to give a reason for and no answer to, is, why, if it be the work of Providence, those things should be so imperfect, so broken, so irregular, that men may either never be able to pass any right judgment of them, as is sometimes the case, or make a perfect judgment of them, which is often the case, and so the end of the intimation be entirely defeated, without any fault, neglect, or omission of the man.

This we can no more account for than we can for the handwriting upon the wall at the great feast of Belshazzar, viz., why it was written in a character which none could understand; and which, if the prophet had not been found, had perhaps never been known, or at least not till the king's fate, which was even then irretrievable, had been over.

This, indeed, we cannot account for, and can only say it is our duty to study these things, to listen to the voice of them and obey their secret dictates, as far as reason directs, without an over-superstitious regard to them any more than a total neglect, leaving the reason of Providence's acting thus to be better understood hereafter.

But to describe a little what I mean by listening to the voice of Providence: it is the reverse of the supine stupid man, whose character I shall come to by-and-by. The man I would recommend lives, first, in a general belief that Providence has the supreme direction of all his affairs, even of his in particular, as well as those of the world; that 't is his mercy that it is so, that 't is the effect of an infinitely wise and gracious disposition from above that he subsists; and that it is not below the dignity any more than 't is remote from the power of an infinite, wise, and good Being to take cognisance of the least thing concerning him.

This, in the consequence, obliges him to all I say; for to him who firmly believes that Providence stoops to concern itself for him, and to order the least article of his affairs, it necessarily follows that he should concern himself in everything that Providence does which comes within his reach, that he may know whether he be interested in it or not.

If he neglects this, he neglects himself — he abandons all concern about himself; since he does not know but that the very next particular act of Providence, which comes within his reach to distinguish, may be interested in him and he in it.

It is not for me to dictate here to any man what particular things relating to him Providence is concerned in, or what not, or how far any incident of life is or is not the particular act and deed of the government of Providence. But as it is the received opinion of every good man that nothing befalls us without the active or passive concern of Providence in it, so it is impossible this good man can be unconcerned in whatever that Providence determines concerning him.

If it be true, as our Saviour Himself says, that not a hair falls from our heads without the will of our

heavenly Father, then not a hair ought to fall from our heads without our having our eyes up to our heavenly Father in it.

I take the text in its due latitude, namely, that not the minutest incident of life befalls us without the active will of our Father directing it, or the passive will of our Father suffering it; so I take the deduction from it in the same latitude, that nothing, of how mean a nature soever, can befall us, but what we ought to have our eyes up to our heavenly Father in it, be resigned to Him in the event, and subjected to Him in the means; and he that neglects this lives in contempt of Providence, and that in the most provoking manner possible.

I am not answerable for any extremes these things may lead weak people into; I know some are apt to entitle the hand of God to the common and most ridiculous trifles in Nature; as a religious creature I knew, seeing a bottle of beer being over ripe burst out, the cork fly up against the ceiling, and the froth follow it like an engine, cried out, "O! the wonders of omnipotent Power!" But I am representing how a Christian with an awful regard to the government of Providence in the world, and particularly in all his own affairs, subjects his mind to a constant obedience to the dictates of that Providence, gives an humble preference to it in all his conclusions, waits the issues of it with a cheerful resignation, and, in a word, listens carefully to the voice of Providence, that he may be always obedient to the heavenly vision.

Whether this Divine emanation has any concern in the notices, omens, dreams, voices, hints, forebodings, impulses, &c., which seem to be a kind of communication with the invisible world, and a converse between the spirits embodied and those unembodied, and how far, without prejudice to the honour and

our reverence of Providence, and without danger of scepticism and a kind of radicated infidelity, those things may be regarded, is a nice and difficult thing to resolve, and I shall treat of it by itself.

It has been the opinion of good men of all ages that such things are not to be totally disregarded; to say how far they are to be depended upon, I am not to take upon me.[1] How far they may or may not be concerned in the influence of Providence, I also dare not say. But as the verity of astronomy is evidenced by the calculation of eclipses, so the certainty of this communication of spirits is established by the concurrence of events with the notices they sometimes give; and if it be true, as I must believe, that the divine Providence takes cognisance of all things belonging to us, I dare not exclude it from having some concern, how much I do not say, in these things also. But of this in its place.

Whenever Providence discovers anything of this *arcanum* I desire to listen to the voice of it, and this is one of the things I recommend to others. Indeed, I would be very cautious how I listen to any other voices from that country than such as I am sure are conveyed to me from Heaven for my better understanding the whole mystery.

If, then, we are to listen to the voice of Nature, and to the voices of creatures, viz., to the voice of the invisible agents of the world of spirits, as above, much more are we to listen to the voice of God.

I have already hinted that He that made the world we are sure guides it, and His providence is equally wonderful as His power. But nothing in the whole course of His providence is more worthy our regard, especially as it concerns us His creatures,

[1] I have here transposed some words which seem to have got out of their proper place.

than the silent voice, if it may be allowed me to call it so, of His managing events and causes. He that listens to the Providence of God listens to the voice of God, as He is seen in the wonders of His government, and as He is seen in the wonders of His omnipotence.

If, then, the events of things are His, as well as the causes, it is certainly well worth our notice, when the sympathy or relation between events of things and their causes most eminently appears; and how can any man who has the least inclination to observe what is remarkable in the world, shut his eyes to the visible discovery which there is in the events of Providence of a supreme Hand guiding them? For example, when visible punishments follow visible crimes, who can refrain confessing the apparent direction of supreme justice? When concurrence of circumstances directs to the cause, men that take no notice of such remarkable pointings of Providence openly contemn Heaven, and frequently stand in the light of their own advantages.

The concurrence of events is a light to their causes, and the methods of Heaven, in some things, are a happy guide to us to make a judgment in others; he that is deaf to these things shuts his ears to instruction, and, like Solomon's fool, hates knowledge.

The dispositions of Heaven to approve or condemn our actions are, many of them, discovered by observation; and it is easy to know when that hand of Providence opens the door for, or shuts it against, our measures, if we will bring causes together, and compare former things with present, making our judgment by the ordinary rules of Heaven's dealing with men.

How, and from what hand, come the frequent instances of severe judgment following rash and hellish

imprecations, when men call for God's judgment, and Providence, or justice rather, obeys the summons, and comes at their call? A man calls God to witness to an untruth, and wishes himself struck dumb, blind, or dead, if it is not true, and is struck dumb, blind, or dead. Is not this a voice? does not Heaven, with the stroke, cry, *Castigo te* — be it to thee as thou hast said? He must be deaf who cannot hear it, and worse than deaf that does not heed it; such executions from Heaven are *in terrorem*, as offenders among men are punished as well for example to others as to prevent their doing the like again.

Innumerable ways the merciful disposition of Providence takes to discover to us what He expects we should do in difficult cases; and doubtless, then, it expects at the same time we should take notice of those directions.

We are short-sighted creatures at best, and can see but a little way before us — I mean, as to the events of things. We ought, therefore, to make use of all the lights and helps we can get; these, if nicely regarded, would be some of the most considerable to guide us in many difficult cases.

Would we carefully listen to the concurrence of Providence in the several parts of our lives, we should stand less in need of the more dangerous helps of visions, dreams, and voices from less certain intelligences.

A gentleman of my acquaintance, being to go a journey into the north, was twice taken very ill the day he had appointed to begin his journey, and so was obliged to put off going. This he took for a direction from Heaven that he should not go at all; and in very few days after his wife was taken sick and died, which made it absolutely necessary for him to be at home to look after his affairs; and had he

gone away before, must certainly have been obliged to come back again.

The Romans had certainly the foundation of this principle in their prudent observations of days and circumstances of days, nor is Scripture itself void of the like, but rather points out to the observation, particularly that of the children of Israel, who, after 430 years were expired from their coming into Egypt, "Even in the self-same day departed they thence" (Exod. xii. 41, 42). This is the day, that remarkable day; several other Scriptures mention periodical times, *dies infaustus* — the prudent shall keep silence in that time, for it is an evil time.

We find Providence stoops to restrain not the actions of men only, but even its own actions to days and times; doubtless for our observation, and in some things for our instruction. I do not so much refer to the revolutions of things and families on particular days, which are therefore by some people called lucky and unlucky days, as I do to the observing how Providence causes the revolutions of days to form a concurrence between the actions of men, which it does not approve, or does approve, and the reward of these actions in this world, by which men may, if they think fit to distinguish and observe right upon them, see the crime or merit of those actions in the Divine resentment, may read the sin in the punishment, and may learn conviction from the revolution of circumstances in the appointment of Heaven.

I have seen several collections of such things made by private hands, some relating to family circumstances, some to public; also, in the unnatural wars in England, between the King and the Parliament, I have heard many such things have been observed. For example, the same day of the year and month that Sir John Hotham kept out Hull against King Charles the First, and refused him

entrance, was the same Sir John Hotham put to death by the very Parliament that he did that exploit for; that King Charles himself was sentenced to die by the High Court of Justice, as it was then called, the same day of the month that he signed the warrant for the execution of the Earl of Strafford, which, as it was then said by some of his friends, was cutting off his own right hand. The same day that King James the Second came to the crown, against the design of the Bill of Exclusion, the same day he was voted abdicated by Parliament, and the throne filled by the Prince of Orange and his princess.

These, or such as these, seem to be a kind of silent sentence of Providence upon such actions, animadverting upon them in a judicial manner, and intimating plainly, that the animadversion had a retrospect to what was passed, and those that listen to the voice of Providence in such things should at least lay them up in their hearts.

Eminent deliverances in sudden dangers are of the most significant kind of providences, and which, accordingly, have a loud voice in them, calling upon us to be thankful to that blessed Hand that has been pleased to spare and protect us. The voice of such signal deliverances is frequently a just call upon us to repentance, and looks directly that way; often 't is a caution against falling into the like dangers we were exposed to, from which nothing but so much goodness could deliver us again. In how many occasions of life, if God's providence had no greater share in our safety than our own prudence, should we plunge and precipitate ourselves into all manner of misery and distress? And how often, for want of listening to those providences, do we miscarry?

Innumerable instances present themselves to us every day, in which the providence of God speaks

to us in things relating to ourselves; in deliverances to excite our thankfulness; in views of danger to awaken our caution, and to make us walk wisely and circumspectly in every step we take; those that are awake to these things, and have their ears open to the voice of them, many times reap the benefit of their instruction by being protected, while those who neglect them are of the number of the simple, who pass on and are punished.

To be utterly careless of ourselves in such cases, and talk of trusting Providence, is a lethargy of the worst nature; for as we are to trust Providence with our estates, but to use, at the same time, all diligence in our callings, so we are to trust Providence with our safety, but with our eyes open to all its necessary cautions, warnings, and instructions, many of which Providence is pleased to give us in the course of life for the direction of our conduct, and which we should ill place to the account of Providence without acknowledging that they ought to be regarded, and a due reverence paid to them upon all occasions.

I take a general neglect of these things to be a kind of practical atheism, or at least a living in a kind of contempt of Heaven, regardless of all that share which His invisible hand has in the things that befall us.

Such a man receives good at the hand of his Maker, but unconcerned at the very nature or original of it, looks not at all to the Benefactor; again, he receives evil, but has no sense of it, as a judicial dispensing of punishment from Heaven; but, insensible of one or other, he is neither thankful for one, nor humble under the other, but stupid in both, as if he was out of God's care, and God Himself out of his thoughts; this is just the reverse of the temper I am recommending, and let the picture recommend itself to any according to its merits.

When Prince Vandemont commanded the confederate army in Flanders, the same campaign that King William was besieging Namur, some troops were ordered to march into the flat country towards Nieuport, in order to make a diversion, and draw down the Count de Montal, who commanded a flying body about Menin, and to keep him from joining the Duke de Villeroy, who commanded the main body of the French army.

The soldiers were ordered, upon pain of death, not to stir from their camp, or to plunder any of the country people ; the reason was evident, because provisions being somewhat scarce, if the boors were not protected they would have fled from their houses, and the army would have been put to great straits, being just entered into the enemy's country.

It happened that five English soldiers, straggling beyond their bounds, were fallen upon, near a farm-house, by some of the country people (for indeed the boors were oftentimes too unmerciful to the soldiers), as if they had plundered them, when, indeed, they had not ; the soldiers defended themselves, got the better, and killed two of the boors, and being, as they thought, justly provoked by being first attacked, they broke into the house, and then used them roughly enough indeed.

They found in the house a great quantity of apples ; the people being fled had left them in possession, and they made no haste to go away, but fell to work with the apples, and heating the oven put a great quantity of apples into the oven to roast. In the meantime the boors, who knew their number to be but five, and had got more help on their side, came down upon them again, attacked the house, forced their way in, mastered the Englishmen, killed two, and took a third and barbarously put him into the oven, which he had heated, where he was smoth-

ered to death; it seems it was not hot enough to burn him.

The other two escaped, but in coming back to the camp they were immediately apprehended by the provosts, and brought to a court-martial, where they were sentenced, not for plundering, for that did not appear, but for being out of the bounds appointed by the general order, as above.

When the sentence came to be executed, the general was prevailed upon to spare one of them, and to order them to cast lots for their lives. This, as it is known, is usually done by throwing dice upon a drum-head, and he that throws highest or lowest, as is appointed before, is to die; at this time he that threw lowest was to live.

When the fellows were brought out to throw, the first threw two sixes, and fell immediately to wringing his hands, crying he was a dead man, but was as much surprised with joy when his comrade throwing, there came up two sixes also.

The officer appointed to see the execution was a little doubtful what to do, but his orders being positive, he commanded them to throw again; they did so, and each of them threw two fives; the soldiers that stood round shouted, and said neither of them was to die. The officer, being a sober thinking man, said it was strange, and looked like something from heaven, and he would not proceed without acquainting the council of war, which was then sitting; they considered a while, and at last ordered them to take other dice and to throw again, which was done, and both the soldiers threw two fours.

The officer goes back to the council of war, who were surprised very much, and looking on it as the voice of Heaven, respited the execution till the general was acquainted with it.

The general sends for the men, and examines

them strictly, who telling him the whole story, he pardoned them, with this expression to those about him: "I love," says he, "in such extraordinary cases to listen to the voice of Providence."

While we are in this uninformed state, where we know so little of the invisible world, it would be greatly our advantage if we knew rightly, and without the bondage of enthusiasm and superstition, how to make use of the hints given us from above for our direction in matters of the greatest importance.

It has pleased God very much to straighten the special and particular directions which He gives to men immediately from Himself; but I dare not say they are quite ceased. We read of many examples in Scripture, how God spake to men by voice immediately from heaven, by appearance of angels, or by dreams and visions of the night, and by all these, not in public and more extraordinary cases only, but in private, personal, and family concerns.

Thus God is said to have appeared to Abraham, to Lot, and to Jacob; angels also have appeared in many other cases, and to many several persons, as to Manoah and his wife, to Zachariah, to the Virgin Mary, and to the Apostles; others have been warned in a dream, as King Abimelech, the false prophet Balaam, Pontius Pilate's wife, Herod, Joseph, the Apostles also, and many others.

We cannot say but these and all the miraculous voices, the prophetic messages prefaced boldly by the ancients with "thus saith the Lord," are ceased, and as we have a more sure word of prophecy handed to us by the mission of Gospel ministers, to which the Scripture says, "We do well that we take heed;" and to whom our blessed Lord has said, "Lo, I am with you to the end of the world;" I say, as we have this Gospel backed with the Spirit

and presence of God, we are no losers if we observe the rule laid down, viz., that we be obedient to the heavenly vision, for such it is, as well as that of the Apostle Peter's dream of the sheet let down from heaven.

I mention this to pay a due reverence to the sufficiency of Gospel revelation, and to the guiding of the Spirit of God, who in spiritual things is given to lead us into all truth; nor would I have anything which I am going to say tend to lessen these great efficients of our eternal salvation.

But I am chiefly upon our conduct in the inferior life, as I may call it; and in this, I think, the voice of God, even His immediate voice from heaven, is not entirely ceased from us, though it may have changed the mediums of communication.

I have heard the divines tell us by way of distinction, that there is a voice of God in His word, and a voice of God in His work; the latter I take to be a subject very awful and very instructing.

This voice of God in His works, is either heard in His works which are already wrought, such as of creation, which fill us with wonder and astonishment, admiration and adoration; "When I view the heavens, the work of Thy hands, the moon and the stars which Thou hast made, then I say, what is man?" &c. Or (2.) His works of government and providence, in which the infinite variety affords a pleasing and instructing contemplation; and it is without question our wisdom and advantage to study and know them, and to listen to the voice of God in them; for this listening to the voice of Providence is a thing so hard to direct, and so little understood, that I find the very thought of it is treated with contempt, even by many pious and good people, as leading to superstition, to enthusiasm, and vain fancies tainted with melancholy,

and amusing the mind with the vapours of the head.

It is true, an ill use may be made of these things, and to tie people too strictly down to a rule, where their own observation is to be the judge, endangers the running into many foolish extremes, entitling a distempered brain too much to the exposition of the sublimest things, and tacking the awful name of Providence to every fancy of their own.

From hence, I think, too much proceeds the extraordinary (note, I say extraordinary) homage paid to omens, flying of birds, voices, noises, predictions, and a thousand foolish things, in which I shall endeavour to state the case fairly between the devil and mankind; but at present I need say no more here, than that they have nothing to do with the subject I am now upon, or the subject I am upon with them.

But as my design is serious, and I hope pious, I shall keep strictly to the exposition I give of my own meaning, and meddle with no other.

By the voice of Providence, therefore, I shall confine myself to the particular circumstances, incident, and accident, which every man's life is full of, and which are, in a more extraordinary manner, said to be peculiar to himself or to his family.

By listening to them, I mean, making such due application of them to his own circumstances as becomes a Christian, for caution in his conduct, and all manner of instruction, receiving all the hints as from Heaven, returning all the praise to, making all the improvement for, and reverencing the sovereignty of his Maker in everything, not disputing or reproaching the justice of Providence; and, which is the main thing I aim at, taking such notice of the several providences that happen in the course of our lives, as by one circumstance to learn how to behave in another.

For example, supposing from my own story, when a young fellow broke from his friends, trampled upon all the wise advices and most affectionate persuasions of his father, and even the tears and entreaties of a tender mother, and would go away to sea, but is checked in his first excursions by being shipwrecked, and in the utmost distress saved by the assistance of another ship's boat, seeing the ship he was in soon after sink to the bottom; — ought not such a young man to have listened to the voice of this providence, and have taken it for a summons to him, that when he was on shore he should stay on shore, and go back to the arms of his friends, hearken to their counsel, and not precipitate himself into farther mischiefs? what happiness might such a prudent step have procured, what miseries and mischiefs would it have prevented in the rest of his unfortunate life!

An acquaintance of mine, who had several such circumstances befall him, as those which I am inclined to call warnings, but entirely neglected them, and laughed at those that did otherwise, suffered deeply for his disregard of omens. He took lodgings in a village near the city of London, and in a house where either he sought bad company, or, at best, could meet with little that was good. Providence, that seemed to animadvert upon his conduct, so ordered it that something or other mischievous always happened to him there, or as he went thither; several times he was robbed on the highway going thither, once or twice taken very ill, at other times his affairs in the world went ill, while he diverted himself there. Several of his friends cautioned him of it, and told him he ought to consider that some superior Hand seemed to hint to him that he should come there no more; he slighted the hint, or at least neglected it after some time, and went to the

same place again, but was so terrified with a most dreadful tempest of thunder and lightning, which fell as it were more particularly upon that part of the country than upon others, that he took it as a warning from Heaven, and resolved not to go there again, and some time after a fire destroyed that house, very few escaping that were in it.

It would be an ill account we should give of the government of divine Providence in the world, if we should argue that its events are so unavoidable, and every circumstance so determined, that nothing can be altered, and that therefore these warnings of Providence are inconsistent with the nature of it. This, besides that I think it would take from the sovereignty of Providence, and deny even God Himself the privilege of being a free agent, it would also so contradict the experience of every man living, in the varieties of his respective life, that he should be unable to give any account for what end many things which Providence directs in the world are directed, and why so many things happen which do happen. Why are evils attending us so evidently foretold, that by those foretellings they are avoided, if it was not determined before they should be avoided and should not befall us?

People that tie up all to events and causes, strip the providence of God which guides the world of all its superintendency, and leave it no room to act as a wise disposer of things.

It seems to me that the immutable wisdom and power of the Creator, and the notion of it in the minds of men, is as dutifully preserved, and is as legible to our understanding, though there be a hand left at liberty to direct the course of natural causes and events. 'T is sufficient to the honour of an immutable Deity, that, for the common incidents of life, they be left to the disposition of a daily agi-

tator, namely, divine Providence, to order and direct them, as it shall see good, within the natural limits of cause and consequence.

This seems to me a much more rational system than that of tying up the hands of the Supreme Power to a road of things, so that none can be acted or permitted but such as was so appointed before to be acted and permitted.

But what if, after all, we were to sit down and acknowledge that the immutability of God's being and the unchangeableness of His actings are not easy to be comprehended by us, or that we may say we are not able to reconcile them with the infinite variation of His Providence, which in all its actings seems to us to be at full liberty to determine anew and give events a turn this way or that way, as its sovereignty and wisdom shall direct; does it follow that these things are not reconcilable because we cannot reconcile them? Why should we not as well say nothing of God is to be understood, because we cannot understand it? or that nothing in Nature is intelligible but what we can understand?

Who can understand the reason, and much less the manner, of the needle tending to the pole by being touched with the loadstone, and by what operation the magnetic virtue is conveyed with a touch? Why that virtue is not communicable to other metals — such as gold, silver, or copper — but to iron only? What sympathetic influence is there between the stone and the star, or the pole? Why tending to that point in the whole arch and not to any other? And why face about to the south pole as soon as it has passed the equinox? Yet we see all these things in their operations and events; we know they must be reconcilable in nature, though we cannot reconcile them; and intelligible in nature, though we cannot understand them. Sure it is as highly

reasonable then for us to believe that the various actings of Providence, which to us appear changeable — one decree, as it were, reversing another, and one action superseding another — may be as reconcilable to the immutability of God and to the unchangeableness of His purposes, though we cannot understand how it is brought to pass, as it is to believe that there is a reason to be given for the agreement and sympathetic correspondence between the magnet and the pole, though at present the manner of it is not discovered and cannot be understood.

If, then, the hand of divine Providence has a spontaneous power of acting, and directed by its own sovereignty proceeds by such methods as it thinks fit, and as we see daily in the course of human things, our business is to converse with the acting part of Providence, with which we more immediately have to do, and not confound our judgment with things which we cannot fully comprehend, such as the why, to what end, and the how, in what manner it acts so and so.

As we are then conversant with the immediate actions of divine Providence, it is our business to study it as much as may be in that part of its actings wherein it is to be known; and this includes the silent actings of Providence, as well as those which are more loud, and which, being declared, speak in public.

There are several silent steps which Providence takes in the world which summon our attention; and he that will not listen to them shall deprive himself of much of the caution and counsel, as well as comfort, which he might otherwise have in his passage through this life; particularly by thus listening to the voice, as I call it, of Providence, we have the comfort of seeing that really an invisible and powerful Hand is employed in, and concerned

for, our preservation and prosperity in the world. And who can look upon the manifest deliverances which he meets with in the infinite variety of life, without being convinced that they are wrought for him without his own assistance by the wise and merciful dispositions of an invisible and friendly Power?

The bringing good events to pass by the most threatening causes, as it testifies a Power that has the government of causes and effects in its hand, so it gives a very convincing evidence of that Power being on good terms with us; as on the contrary, when the like Providence declares against us, we ought to make a suitable use of it another way, that is to say, take the just alarm, and apply to the necessary duties of humiliation and repentance.

These things may be jested with by the men of fashion, but I am supposing myself talking to men that have a sense of a future state, and of the economy of an invisible world upon them, and neither to atheists, sceptics, or persons indifferent, who are, indeed, near of kin to them both.

As there are just reflections to be made upon the various conduct of Providence in the several passages of man's life, so there are infinite circumstances in which we may furnish ourselves with directions in the course of life, and in the most sudden incidents, as well to obtain good as avoid evil.

Much of the honour due to the goodness of Providence is unjustly taken away from it by men that give themselves a loose in a general neglect of these things; but that which is still more absurd to me is, that some men are [so] obstinately resolved against paying the homage of their deliverances to their Maker, or paying the reverence due to His terrors in anything that befalls them ill, where it ought to be paid, that they will give all that honour to another.

If it was well, they tell you they know not how, but so it happened, or it was so by good chance, and the like. This is a sort of language I cannot understand; it seems to be a felonious thought in its very design, robbing Heaven of the honour due to it, and listing ourselves in the regiment of the ungrateful.

But this is not all, for one crime leads on to another; if this part is felony or robbery, the next is treason, for resolving first to deny the homage of good or evil events to God, from whose hands they come, they go on and pay it to the devil, the enemy of His praise, and rival of His power.

Two of these wretches travelled a little journey with me some years ago, and in their return, some time after I was gone from them, they met with a very different adventure, and telling me the story, they expressed themselves thus: They were riding from Huntingdon towards London, and in some lanes betwixt Huntingdon and Caxton, one happened, by a slip of his horse's foot, which lamed him a little, to stay about half a mile behind the other, was set upon by some highwaymen, who robbed him, and abused him very much; the other went on to Caxton, not taking care of his companion, thinking he had stayed on some particular occasion, and escaped the thieves, they making off across the country towards Cambridge.

"Well," says I to the first, "how came you to escape?" — "I don't know, not I," says he; "I happened not to look behind me when his horse stumbled, and I went forward, and by good luck," adds he again, "I heard nothing of the matter." Here was, "it happened," and "by good luck," but not the least sense of the government of Providence in this affair, or its disposition for his good, but an empty idol of air, or rather an imaginary, nonsensical nothing, an image more inconsistent than

those I mentioned among the Chinese; not a monster, indeed, of a frightful shape and ugly figure, loathsome and frightful, but a mere phantasm, an idea, a nonentity — a name without being, a miscalled, unborn, nothing, hap, luck, chance; that is to say, a name put upon the medium, which they set up in their imagination for want of a will to acknowledge their Maker, and recognise the goodness which had particularly preserved him. This was the most ungrateful piece of folly, or, to speak more properly, the maddest and most foolish piece of ingratitude, that ever I met with.

Well, if this was foolish and preposterous, the other was as wicked and detestable; for when the first had told his tale I turned to the other, and asked him what was the matter. "Why, how came this to pass?" said I; "why has this disaster fallen all upon you? How was it?" — "Nay," says he, "I do not know; I was a little behind, and my horse chanced to slip and lame himself, and he went forward and left me; and as the devil would have it, these fellows came across the country and chopped upon me," &c.

Here was first chance, the same mock goddess as before, lamed his horse, and next, the devil ordered the highwaymen to chop upon him that moment. Now, though it may be true that the highwaymen were, even by their employment, doing the devil's office of going to and fro, seeking whom they may plunder, yet 't was a higher Hand than Satan's that delivered this poor blind fellow into their power.

We have a plain guide for this in Scripture language, in the law of manslaughter, or death, as we call it foolishly enough, by misadventure; it is in Exod. xxi. 13, in the case of casual killing a man; it is expressed thus: "If a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand." This was not to be

accounted murder, but the slayer was to fly to the city of refuge.

Here it is evident that God takes all these misadventures into His own hand; and a man killed by accident is a man whom God has delivered up, for what end in His providence is known only to Himself, to be killed in that manner, perhaps vindictively, perhaps not.

With what face can any man say, this was as the devil would have it, or as bad luck would have it, or it happened, or chanced, or fell out? all which are our simple and empty ways of talking of things that are ordered by the immediate hand or direction of God's providence.

The words last quoted from the Scripture, of God's delivering a man into another man's hand to be killed unwillingly, are fully explained in another place, Deut. xix. 5. "As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbour, that he die, he shall flee unto one of these cities and live."

The wicked thoughtless creature I have just mentioned, whose horse fell lame, and stopped his travelling till he might come just in the way of those thieves, who, it seems, were crossing the country, perhaps upon some other exploit, ought to have reflected that Providence, to chastise him, and bring him to a sense of his dependence upon and being subjected to His power, had directed him to be separated from his companion, that he might fall into the hands that robbed and abused him; and the other had no less obligation to give thanks for his deliverance; but how contrary they acted in both cases you have heard.

We have had abundance of collections, in my re-

membrance, of remarkable providences, as they are called, and many people are forward to call them so, but this does not come up to the case in hand.

Though contemning Providence, and giving the homage due to it, as above, to the devil, or to chance, fate, and I know not what embryos of the fancy, are impious; yet every one that avoids this evil does not come up to the particular point I am speaking of, for there is a manifest difference between acknowledging the being and operations of Providence and listening to its voice, as many people acknowledge a God that obey none of His commands, and concern themselves in nothing of their duty to Him.

To listen to the voice of Providence, is to take strict notice of all the remarkable steps of Providence which relate to us in particular, to observe if there is nothing in them instructing to our conduct, no warning to us for avoiding some danger, no direction for the taking some particular steps for our safety or advantage, no hint to remind us of such and such things omitted, no conviction of something committed, no vindictive step, by way of retaliation, marking out the crime in the punishment. You may easily observe the differences between the directions and warnings of Providence, when duly listened to, and the notices of spirits from an invisible world, viz., that these are dark hints of evil, with very little direction to avoid it; but those notices, which are to be taken from the proceedings of Providence, though the voice be a kind of silent or soft whisper, yet 't is generally attended with an offer of the means for escaping the evil, nay, very often leads by the hand to the very proper steps to be taken, and even obliges us, by a strong conviction of the reason of it, to take those steps.

It is in vain for me to run into a collection of stories; for example, where the variety is infinite,

and things vary as every particular man's circumstances vary; but as every event in the world is managed by the superintendency of Providence, so every providence has in it something instructing, something that calls upon us to look up, or look out, or look in.

Every one of those heads is big with particular explanations, but my business is not preaching, I am making observations and reflections, let those make enlargements who read it; in a word, there is scarce any particular providence attends our lives, but we shall find, if we give due weight to it, that it calls upon us, either —

1. To look up, and acknowledge the goodness of God in sparing us, the bounty of God in providing for us, the power of God in delivering and protecting us; not forgetting to look up, and acknowledge, and be humble under the justice of God in being angry with and afflicting us.

2. Or to look out, and take the needful caution and warning given of evil approaching, and prepare either to meet or avoid it.

3. Or to look in, and reflect upon what we find Heaven animadverting upon, and afflicting us for taking notice of the summons to repent and reform.

And this is, in a word, what I mean by listening to the voice of Providence.

CHAPTER SIX

OF THE PROPORTION BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN WORLD

I HAVE said something of this already in my inquiry after the state of religion in the world, but upon some reflections which fell in my way since, I think it may offer further thoughts, very improving, as well as diverting.

When we view the world geographically, take the plane of the globe, and measure it by line, and cut it out into latitude and longitude, degrees, leagues, and miles, we may see, indeed, that a pretty large spot of the whole is at present under the government of Christian powers and princes, or under the influence of their power and commerce, by arms, navies, colonies, and plantations, or their factories, missionaries, residences, &c.

But I am loath to say we should take this for a fulfilling the promise made to the Messiah, that His kingdom should be exalted above all nations, and the Gospel be heard to the end of the earth; I was going to say, and yet without any profaneness, that we hope God will not put us off so. I must acknowledge I expect, in the fulfilling of these promises, that the time will come when the knowledge of God shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, that the Church of God shall be set open to the four winds, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be exalted above the tops of the mountains, and all the nations shall flow into it (Isaiah ii. 2);

that is to say, that the Christian religion, or the profession of the doctrine of the Messiah, shall be made national over the whole globe, according to those words (Matt. xxiv. 14; Mark xiii. 13; Luke xxiv. 17). But this may be a little too apocalyptical or visionary for the times; and it is no business of mine to enter upon the interpretation of Scripture difficulties, whatever I may understand or believe myself about them, but rather to make my observations, as I have begun, upon things which now are, and which we have seen and know; let what is to come be as He pleases who has ordered things past, and knows what is to follow.

The present case is to speak of the mathematical proportion that there is now to be observed upon the plane of the globe, and observe how small a part of the world it is where the Christian religion has really prevailed and is nationally professed — I speak of the Christian religion where it is, as I call it, national, that is, in its utmost latitude; and I do so that I may give the utmost advantage, even against myself, in what I am going to say; and therefore, when I come to make deductions for the mixtures of barbarous nations, I shall do it fairly also.

I have nothing to do with the distinctions of Christians: I hope none will object against calling the Roman Church a Christian Church in this respect, and the professors of the Popish Church Christians; neither do I scruple to call the Greek Church Christian, though in some places so blended with superstition and barbarous customs, as in Georgia, Armenia, and the borders of Persia and Tartary, likewise in many parts of the Czar of Muscovy's dominions, that, as before, the name of Christ is little more than just spoken of, and literally known, without any material knowledge of His person,

nature, and dignity, or of the homage due to Him as the Redeemer of the world.

The nations of the world, then, where Christ is acknowledged, and the Christian religion is professed nationally, be it Romish Church or Greek Church, or even the Protestant Church, including all the several subdivisions and denominations of Protestants, take them all as Christians, I say, these nations are as follow: —

1. In Europe: Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Great Britain, Denmark, Sweden, Muscovy, Poland, Hungary, Transylvania, Moldavia, and Wallachia.
2. In Asia: Georgia and Armenia.
3. In Africa: no place at all, the few factories of European merchants only excepted.
4. In America: The colonies of Europeans only, as follow: —

1. The Spaniards in Mexico and Peru, the coasts of Chili, Carthagena, and St. Martha, and a small colony at Buenos Ayres on the Rio de la Plata.
2. The Portuguese in the Brazils.
3. The British on the coast of America, from the Gulf of Florida to Cape Breton, on the mouth of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, or the great river of Canada, also a little in Newfoundland and Hudson's Bay.
4. The French in the river of Canada and the great river of Mississippi.
5. The English, French, and Dutch on the islands called the Caribbees, &c.

The chief seat of the Christian religion is at present in Europe. But if we measure the quarter of the world we call Europe upon the plan of the globe, and cast up the northern, frozen, and indeed uninhabitable part of it, such as Laponia, Petzora, Candora, Obdora, and the Samoiedes, with part of

Siberia, they are all pagans, with the eastern unpeopled deserts bordering on Asia, on the way to China, and the vast extent of land on that side, which, though nominally under the dominion of Muscovy, is yet all pagan, even nationally so — under no real government, but of their own pagan customs.

If we go from thence to the south, and take out of it the European Tartars, viz., of Circassia, the Crimea, and Budziack — if you go on, and draw a line from the Crim Tartary to the Danube, and from thence to the Adriatic Gulf, and cut off all the Grand Seignior's European dominions — I say, take this extent of land out of Europe, and the remainder does not measure full two-thirds of land in Europe under the Christian government, much of which is also desert and uninhabited, or at least by such as cannot be called Christians and do not concern themselves about it, as, particularly, the Swedish and Norwegian Lapland, the more eastern and southern Muscovy, beyond the Volga, even to Karakathie, and to the borders of Asia, on the side of India — I say, taking in this part, not above one-half of Europe is really inhabited by Christians.

The Czar of Muscovy, of the religion of whose subjects I have said enough, is lord of a vast extended country; and those who have measured it critically say his dominions are larger than all the rest of Europe, that is to say, that he possesses a full half as much as Europe; and in those dominions he is master of abundance of nations that are pagan or Mahomedan, as, in particular, Circassia, being conquered by him, the Circassian Tartars, who are all Mahomedans, or the most of them, are his subjects.

However, since a Christian monarch governs them, we must, upon the plan I laid down, call this a Christian country; and that alone obliges me to give two-thirds of Europe to the Christians.

But this will bring another account upon my hands to balance it, viz., that excepting this two-thirds, there will not come one Christian to be accounted for in any of the other three parts of the world, except Georgia and Armenia. As for Africa, there is nothing to be mentioned on that side, all the Christians that are on the continent of Africa consisting only of a few merchants residing at the coast towns in the Mediterranean, as at Alexandria, Grand Cairo, Tunis, Tripoli, Algiers, &c.; the factories of the English and Dutch on the coast of Guinea, the Gold Coast, the coast of Angola, and at the Cape of Good Hope; all which put together, as I have calculated them, and as they are calculated by a better judgment than mine, will not amount to 5000 people, excepting Christian slaves in Sallee, Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli, &c., which are not so many more.

America is thronged with Christians, God wot, such as they are; for I must confess the European inhabitants of some of the colonies there, as well French and English as Spanish and Dutch, very ill merit that name.

Some part of America is entirely under the dominion and government of the European nations; and having indeed destroyed the natives, and made desolate the country, they may be said to be Christian countries in the sense as above.

But what numbers do these amount to compared to the inhabitants of so great a part of the world as that of America, which at least is three times as big as Europe, and in which are still vast extended countries, infinite numbers of people, of nations unknown and even unheard of, which neither the English, French, Spanish, or Portuguese have ever seen? Witness the populous cities and innumerable nations which Sir Walter Raleigh met with in his

voyage up the great river Oronooque, in one of which they talk of two millions of people; witness the nations, infinitely populous, spread on both sides the river Amazon, and all the country between these two prodigious rivers, being a country above 400 miles in breadth and 1600 miles in length, besides its extent south, even to the Rio Paraguay, and S.E. to the Brazils, a rich, fruitful, and populous country; and in which, by the accounts given, there must be more people inhabiting at this time than in all the Christian part of Europe put together, being the chief if not the only part of America into which the Spaniards never came, and whither the frighted people fled from them, being so fortified with rivers and impassable bays and rapid currents, and so inaccessible by the number of inhabitants, the heat of the climate, and the mountains, waterfalls, and such other obstructions, that the Spaniards durst never attempt to penetrate the way.

What are the numbers of Christians in America, put them all together, to the inhabitants of these parts of America, besides the northern parts of America, not inquired into?

But we are not calculating of people yet, but the extent of land that the Christians possess; the British colonies in the north are by far the most populous, even more than the Spaniards themselves, though the latter extend themselves over more land.

The British colonies in the north of America are supposed to contain three hundred thousand souls, including Nova Scotia, New England, New York, New Jersey, East and West Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and Carolina; and these lie extended upon the coast from the latitude of 32 degrees to 47, or thereabouts, being about 750 miles in length; but then much of this is very thinly peopled, and the

breadth they lie west into the country is little or nothing, 50 or 60 miles is in many places the most. And except some plantations in Virginia, in Rappahanock, and James River in Virginia, occasioned by the great inlet of the bay there, and of the rivers that fall into it, we can see nothing a hundred miles within that land but waste and woods, whose inhabitants seem to be fled farther up into the country, from the face of their enemies the Christians.

So that all this planting, though considerable, amounts to no more, compared to the country itself, than a long narrow slip of land upon the sea-coast, there being very few English inhabitants planted anywhere above twenty miles from the sea, or from some navigable river, and even that sea-coast itself very thinly inhabited, and particularly from New England to New York, from New England north to Annapolis, from Virginia to Carolina; so that all this great colony or collection of colonies — nay, though we include the French at Canada — are but a point, a handful, compared to the vast extent of land lying west and north-west from them, even to the South Sea, an extent of continent full of innumerable nations of people unknown, undiscovered, never searched into, or indeed heard of but from one another, much greater in its extent than all Europe.

If we take the north part of America, exclusive of all the country which the Spaniards possess, and which they call the empire of Mexico, and exclusive too of what the English and French possess on the coast and in the two rivers of Canada and Mississippi as above, which indeed are but trifles, the rest of that country, which, as far as it has been travelled into, is found exceeding populous, is a great deal larger than all Europe, though we have not reckoned the most northern, frozen, and almost uninhabitable

part of it, where no end can be found, and where it is there can be no doubt but there is a contiguous continent with the northern part of Asia, or so near joining it as to be only parted by a narrow gulf or strait of sea, easily passed over both by man and beast, or else it would be hard to give an account how man or beast came into that part of the world — I say this vast continent, full of people, and no doubt inhabited by many millions of souls, is all wrapt up in idolatry and paganism, given up to ignorance and blindness, worshipping the sun, the moon, the fire, the hills their fathers, and, in a word, the devil.

As to the thing we call religion, or the knowledge of the true God, much less the doctrine of the Messiah and the name of Christ, they not only have not, but never had the least intimation of it on earth, or revelation of it from heaven, till the Spaniards came among them; nay, and now Christians are come among them, it is hard to say whether the paganism is much abated except by the infinite ravages the Spaniards made where they came, who rooted out idolatry by destroying the idolaters, not by converting them; having cruelly cut off, as their own writers affirm, above seventy millions of people, and left the country naked of its inhabitants for many hundred miles together.

But what need we come to calculations for the present time with respect to America? Let us but be at the trouble to look back a little more than a hundred years, which is as nothing at all in the argument; how had the whole continent of America, extended almost from pole to pole, with all the islands round it, and peopled with such innumerable multitudes of people, been as it were entirely abandoned to the devil's government, even from the beginning of time, or at least from the second peopling

the world by Noah to the sixteenth century, when Ferdinando Cortez, general for the famous Charles the Fifth, first landed in the Gulf of Mexico.

We have heard much of the cruelty of the Spaniards in destroying such multitudes of the inhabitants there, and of cutting off whole nations by fire and sword; but as I am for giving up all the actions of men to the government of Providence, it seems to me that Heaven had determined such an act of vengeance should be executed, and of which the Spaniards were instruments, to destroy those people, who were come up (by the influence of the devil, no doubt) to such a dreadful height, in that abhorred custom of human sacrifices, that the innocent blood cried for it, and it seemed to be time to put a stop to that crime, lest the very race of people should at last be extinct by their own butcheries.

The magnitude of this may be guessed at by the temple consecrated to the great idol of Vistlipustli, in the city of Mexico, where, at the command of Montezuma, the pagan monarch, twenty thousand men were sacrificed in a year, and the wall hung a foot thick with clotted blood, dashed in ceremony against the side of that place on those occasions.

This abomination God in His providence put an end to by destroying those nations from the face of the earth, bringing a race of bearded strangers upon them, cutting in pieces man, woman, and child, destroying their idols, and even the idolatry itself by the Spaniards, who, however wicked in themselves, yet were in this to be esteemed instruments in the hand of Heaven to execute the Divine justice on nations whose crimes were come up to a full height, and that called for vengeance.

I make no doubt (to carry on this digression a little farther) that when God cast out the heathen, so the Scripture calls it, from before the Israelites,

and the iniquity of the people of the land was full, Joshua, Moses, and the Israelites were taxed with as much cruelty and inhumanity in destroying the cities, killing man, woman, and child, nay, even destroying the very cattle, and trees, and fruits of the earth, as ever the Spaniards were charged with in the conquest of Mexico.

This is apparent by the terror that was spread upon the minds of the people round about them, whereof thousands fled to other parts of the world. History tells us that the first builders of the city of Carthage, long before the Roman times, or before the fable of Queen Dido, were some Phœnicians, that is to say, Canaanites, who, flying for their lives, got ships and went away to sea, planting themselves on the coast of Africa as the first place of safety they arrived at; and to prove this a pillar of stone was found not far from Tripoli, on which was cut, in Phœnician characters, these words: "We are of those who fled from the face of Joshua the robber."

The cruelties of the Israelites, in destroying the nations of the land of Canaan, was commanded from heaven, and therein Joshua was justified in what was done. The cruelties of the Spaniards, however abhorred by us, was doubtless an appointment of God for the destruction of the most wicked and abominable people upon earth.

But this is all a digression; I come to my calculation. It is true that the Spaniards, whom I allow to be Christians, have possessed the empires of Mexico and Peru; but after all the havoc they made, and the millions of souls they dismissed out of life there, yet the natives are infinitely the majority of the inhabitants; and though many of them are Christianised, they are little more than subjected; and take all the Spaniards, Christians, and all the Portuguese in the Brazils, all the English

and French in the north, and, in a word, all the Christians in America, and put them together, they will not balance one part of the pagans or Mahomedans in Europe; for example, take the Crim Tartars of Europe, who inhabit the banks of the Euxine Sea, they are more in number than all the Christians in America; so that setting one nation against the other, and you may reckon that there is not one Christian, or as if there were not one Christian, in those three parts of the world, Asia, Africa, and America, except the Greeks of Asia.

This is a just but a very sad account of the small extent of Christian knowledge in the world; and were it considered as it ought, would put the most powerful princes of Europe upon thinking of some methods, at least, to open a way for the spreading Christian knowledge. I am not much of the opinion, indeed, that religion should be planted by the sword; but as the Christian princes of Europe, however few in number, are yet so superior to all the rest of the world in martial experience and the art of war, nothing is more certain than that, if they could unite their interest, they are able to beat paganism out of the world. Nothing is more certain than this, that would the Christian princes unite their powers and act in concert, they might destroy the Turkish Empire and the Persian kingdom, and beat the very name of Mahomet out of the world.

It is no boast to say that, were there no intestine broils among us, the Christian soldiery is so evidently superior to the Turkish at this time, that had they all joined after the late battle at Belgrade to have sent 80,000 veteran soldiers to have joined Prince Eugene, and supplied him with money and provisions by the ports of the Adriatic Gulf and the Archipelago, that prince would in two or three

campaigns have driven the Mahomedans out of Europe, taken Constantinople, and have overturned the Turkish Empire.

After such a conquest, whither might not the Christian religion have spread? The King of Spain with the same ease would reduce the Moors of Barbary, and dispossess those sons of hell, the Algerines, Tripolines, Tunizens, and all the Mahomedan pirates of that coast, and plant again the ancient churches of Africa, the sees of Tertullian, St. Cyprian, &c.

Nay, even the Czar of Muscovy, an enterprising and glorious prince, well assisted and supported by his neighbours, the northern powers, who together are masters of the best soldiery in the world, would not find it impossible to march an army of 36,000 foot and 16,000 horse, in spite of waste and inhospitable deserts, even to attack the Chinese Empire, who, notwithstanding their infinite numbers, pretended policy, and great skill in war, would sink in the operation; and such an army of disciplined European soldiers would beat all the forces of that vast empire with the same or greater ease as Alexander with 30,000 Macedonians destroyed the army of Darius, which consisted of 680,000 men.

And let no man ridicule this project on account of the march, which I know they will call 3000 miles, and more. While there is no obstruction but the length of the way, it is not so difficult as some may imagine; 't is far from impossible to furnish sufficient provisions for the march, which is indeed the only difficulty that carries any terror in it.

Such a prince as the Czar of Muscovy cannot want the assistance of innumerable hands for the amassing, or carriage for conveying, to proper magazines sufficient stores of provisions for the maintaining a select chosen body of men to march over the deserts, for in

the grand march no useless mouths should be found to feed.

Why, then, should not the Christian princes think it a deed of compassion to the souls of men, as well as an humble agency to the work of Providence, and to the fulfilling the promises of their Saviour, by a moderate and, as far as in them lies, a bloodless conquest, to reduce the whole world to the government of Christian power, and so plant the name and knowledge of Christ Jesus among the heathens and Mahomedans? I am not supposing that they can plant real religion in this manner; the business of power is to open the way to the gospel of peace; the servants of the king of the earth are to fight, that the servants of the King of Heaven may preach.

Let but an open door be made for the preaching of the word of God, and the ministers of Christ be admitted, if they do not spread Christian knowledge over the face of the earth the fault will be theirs. Let but the military power reduce the pagan world, and banish the devil and Mahomet from the face of the earth, the knowledge of God be diligently spread, the word of God duly preached, and the people meekly and faithfully instructed in the Christian religion, the world would soon receive the truth, and the knowledge of Divine things would be the study and delight of mankind.

I know some nice and difficult people would object here, How are the present body of Christians, as you call them, qualified to convert the pagan and Mahomedan world, when they are not able to settle the main point, viz., What the Christian religion is, or what they would convert them to? That Christianity is subdivided into so many parts and particular principles, the people so divided in their opinion; and, that which is still worse, there is so little char-

ity among the several sorts, that some of them would sooner side with Mahomet against their neighbours than assist to propagate that particular doctrine in religion which they condemn. Thus the members of the Protestant faith would make it a point of principle not to support or propagate the interest of Popery in such a conquest as this; and again, the Catholics would as much make it a duty on them to root out heresy — so they call the Protestant doctrine — as they would to root out paganism and the worship of devils.

I would not answer for some Protestants that they would not be of the same mind, as to particular divisions among Protestants. The difference among some opinions is such, and their want of charity one to another sets them at such variance, that if they do not censure one another for devil-worshippers, yet we know they frequently call some of the opposite principles doctrines of devils, and persecute one another with as much fury as ever the heathen persecuted the primitive churches.

Witness the violences which have reigned between the Episcopal and Presbyterian parties in the north of Ireland and in Scotland, which has so often broken out into a flame of war, and that flame been always quenched with blood.

Witness the frequent persecutions, wars, massacres, and other cruel and unnatural doings, which have been in these parts of the world among Christians the effect of a mistaken zeal for the Christian religion; which, as it was not planted by blood and violence, so much less can Christians justify the endeavours to erect this or that opinion in it by the ruin and blood of their brethren.

But this is far from being a reason why we should not think it our duty to subdue the barbarous and idolatrous nations of the world in order to suppress

the worshipping the devil, who is the enemy not only of God and of all true religion in the world, but who is the great destroyer and enemy of mankind, and of his future or present felicity; and whose business is always, to the utmost of his power, to involve or retain them either in ignorance or in error.

I distinguish between forcing religion upon people, or forcing them to entertain this or that opinion of religion — I say, I distinguish between that and opening the door for religion to come among them. The former is a violence, indeed, inconsistent with the nature of religion itself, whose energy prevails and forces its way into the minds of men by another sort of power; whereas the latter is removing a force unjustly put already upon the minds of men, by the artifice of the devil, to keep the Christian religion out of the world; so that, indeed, I propose a war not with men, but with the devil — a war to depose Satan's infernal tyranny in the world and set open the doors to religion, that it may enter if men will receive it; if they will not receive it, be that to themselves.

In a word, to unchain the wills of men, set their inclinations free, that their reason may be at liberty to influence their understandings, and that they may have the faith of Christ preached to them, whether they will hear or forbear, I say, as above, is no part of the question; let the Christian doctrine and its spiritual enemies alone to struggle about that. I am for dealing with the temporalities of the devil, and deposing that human power which is armed in the behalf of obstinate ignorance, and resolute to keep out the light of religion from the mind.

I think this is a lawful and just war, and, in the end, kind both to them and their posterity: let me bring the case home to ourselves.

Suppose neither Julius Cæsar or any of the Roman

generals or emperors had cast their eyes towards Britain for some ages, or till the Christian religion had spread over the whole Roman Empire: 't is true the Britons might at last have received the Christian faith in common with the rest of the northern world, but they had yet lain above three hundred years longer in ignorance and paganism than they did; and some hundred thousands of people who proved zealous Christians, nay, even martyrs for the Christian doctrine, would have died in the professed paganism of the Britons.

Now 't is evident the invasion of the Romans was an unjust, bloody, tyrannical assault upon the poor Britons, against all right and property, against justice and neighbourhood, and merely carried on for conquest and dominion. Nor, indeed, had the Romans any just pretence of war; yet God was pleased to make this violence be the kindest thing that could have befallen the British nation, since it brought in the knowledge of God among the Britons, and was a means of reducing a heathen and barbarous nation to the faith of Christ, and to embrace the Messias.

Thus Heaven serves itself of men's worst designs, and the avarice, ambition, and rage of men have been made use of to bring to pass the glorious ends of Providence, without the least knowledge or design of the actors. Why, then, may not the great undertakings of the princes of Europe, if they could be brought to act in concert, with a good design to bring all the world to open their doors to the Christian religion, and by consequence their ears — I say, why may not such an attempt be blessed from heaven with so much success, at least as to make way for bringing in nominal Christianity among the nations? For as to obliging the people to be of this or that opinion afterward, that is another case.

There is a great pother made in the world among the several denominations of Christians about coercion, erecting a church, and compelling men to come in; that is to say, one sort of Christians persecuting another sort of Christians to make them worship Christ their way, as if Christ had no sheep but one fold.

I distinguish much between using force to reduce heathens and savages to Christianity, and using force to reduce those that are already Christians to be of this or that opinion; I will not say but a war might be very just, and the cause be righteous, to reduce the worshippers of the pagodas of India to the knowledge and obedience of Christianity, when it would be a horrible injustice to commence a like war to reduce even a Popish nation to be Protestant.

But my proposed war does not reach so far as that neither; for though I would have a nation of pagans conquered that their idols and temples might be destroyed, and their idol worship be abolished, yet I would be very far from punishing and persecuting the people for not believing in Christ; for if we believe that faith, as the Scripture says, is the gift of God, how can we, upon any Christian foundation, punish or persecute the man for not exercising that which God had not given him? Hence, compelling men to conform to this or that particular profession of the Christian religion, is to me impious and unchristian.

And shall I speak a word here of the unhappy custom among Christians of reviling one another with words on account of differing opinions in religion? It was a part of apocryphal scripture, taken from one of the traditional sayings of the Rabbis, "Thou shalt not mock at the gods of the heathens;" but ribaldry, satire, and sarcasms are the usage we give one another every day on the subject of relig-

ion, as if slander and the severities of the tongue were not the worst kind of violence in matters of the Christian religion.

In a word, I must acknowledge, if I am to speak of reproach in general, I know no worse persecution than that of the tongue. Solomon says, "There are that speak like the piercing of a sword;" and King David was so sensible of the bitterness of the tongue, that he is full of exclamations upon the subject; among the rest, he says of his enemies, "They have compassed me about with words of hatred. . . . He clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment" (Psalm cix. 3, 18).

It is indeed remote from the subject I am upon to talk of this kind of uncharitable dealing, but as just observations are never out of season, it may have its uses; let no man slight the hint, though it were meant for religion only, for that, indeed, is my present subject: there is doubtless as severe a persecution by the tongue as that of fire and faggot, and some think 't is as hard to be borne.

I have never met with so much of this anywhere in all my travels as in England, where the mouths of the several sects and opinions are so effectually open against one another, that, albeit common charity commands us to talk the best of particular persons in their failings and infirmities, yet here, censuring, condemning, and reproaching one another on account of opinions is carried on with such a gust, that lets every one see nothing but death and destruction can follow, and no reconciliation can be expected.

I have lived to see men of the best light be mistaken, as well in party as in principles, as well in politics as in religion, and find not only occasion, but even a necessity, to change hands or sides in both; I have seen them sometimes run into contrary extremes, beyond their first intention, and even

without design; nay, in those unhappy changes I have seen them driven into lengths they never designed, by the fiery resentment of those whom they seemed to have left, and whom they differed from. I have lived to see those men acknowledge, even publicly and openly, they were wrong and mistaken, and express their regret for being misled very sincerely; but I cannot say I have lived to see the people they have desired to return to forgive or receive them. Perhaps the age I have lived in has not been a proper season for charity; I hope futurity will be furnished with better Christians; or perhaps 't is appointed so to illustrate the Divine mercy, and let mankind see that they are the only creatures that never forgive. I have seen a man in the case I speak of, offer the most sincere acknowledgments of his having been mistaken, and this not in matters essential either to the person's morals or Christianity, but only in matters of party, and with the most moving expressions desire his old friends to forgive what has been passed, and have seen their return be mocking him with what they called a baseness of spirit, and a mean submission; I have seen him expostulate with them, why they should not act upon the same terms with a penitent, as God Himself not only prescribed, but yields to; and have seen them in return tell him God might forgive him if He pleased, but they would never, and then expose all those offers to the first comer in banter and ridicule: but take me right too, I have seen at the same time, that to wiser men it has been always thought to be an exposing themselves, and an honour to the person.

I speak this too feelingly, and therefore say no more; there is a way by patience, to conquer even the universal contempt of mankind; and though two drams of that drug be a vomit for a dog, it is, in my

experience, the only method; there is a secret peace in it, and in time the rage of men will abate. A constant steady adhering to virtue and honesty, and showing the world that whatever mistakes he might be led into, supposing them to be mistakes, that yet the main intention and design of his life was sincere and upright: He that governs the actions of men by an unbiassed hand, will never suffer such a man to sink under the weight of universal prejudice and clamour.

I, Robinson Crusoe, grown old in affliction, borne down by calumny and reproach, but supported from within, boldly prescribe this remedy against universal clamours and contempt of mankind: patience, a steady life of virtue and sobriety, and a comforting dependence on the justice of Providence, will first or last restore the patient to the opinion of his friends, and justify him in the face of his enemies; and in the meantime will support him comfortably in despising those who want manners and charity, and leave them to be cursed from Heaven with their own passions and rage.

This very thought made me long ago claim a kind of property in some good old lines of the famous George Withers, Esq., made in prison in the Tower. He was a poetical gentleman who had, in the time of the civil wars in England, been unhappy in changing sides too often, and had been put into the Tower by every side in their turn; once by the King, once by the Parliament, once by the Army, then by the Rump, and at last again, I think, by General Monk; in a word, whatever side got up, he had the disaster to be down. The lines are thus:

The world and I may well agree,
As most that are offended;
For I slight her, and she slights me,
And there 's our quarrel ended.

For service done and love expressed,
Though very few regard it,
My country owes me bread at least;
But if I am debarred it,
Good conscience is a daily feast,
And sorrow never marred it.

But this article of verbal persecution has hurried me from my subject, which I must return to.

I have spoken of a project for the Czar of Muscovy, worthy of a monarch who is lord of so vast an extent of country as the Russian Empire reaches to, which is in effect, as I have said, much more than half Europe, and consequently an eighth part of the world. I have given my thoughts how a war to open a door for the Christian religion may be justifiable, and that it has not the least tincture of persecution in it. If the Christian princes of the world, who now spend their force so much to an ill purpose in real persecution, would join in an universal war against paganism and devil-worship, the savage part of mankind would, in one age, be brought to bow their knees to the God of Truth, and would bless the enterprise itself in the end of it, as the best thing that ever befell them; nor could such an attempt fail of success, unless Heaven in justice had determined to shut up the world longer in darkness, and the cup of their abominations was not yet full. But I may venture to say there would be much more ground for such Christian princes to hope and expect the concurrence of Heaven in such an undertaking, than in sheathing their swords in the bowels of their brethren, and making an effusion of Christian blood upon every slight pretence, as we see has been the case in Europe for above thirty years past.

I had intended to remark here that, as the country possessed by Christians is but a spot of the globe compared to the heathen, pagan, and Mahometan

world, so the number of real Christians among the nations professing the Christian name is yet a more disproportioned part, a mere trifle, and hardly to be compared with the infinite numbers of those who, though they call themselves Christians, yet know as little of God and religion as can be imagined to be known where the word Christian is spoken of, and neither seek or desire to know more; in a word, who know but little of God or Jesus Christ, heaven or hell, and regard none of them.

This is a large field, and being thoroughly searched into, would, I doubt not, reduce the real faithful subjects of the kingdom of Jesus Christ to a much fewer number than those of Mahomet; nay, than those of the monarch of Germany, and make our Lord appear a weaker prince, speaking in the sense of kingdoms, than many of the kings of the earth. And if it be true that the old king of France should say, that he had more loyal subjects than King Jesus, I do not know but, in the sense his most Christian majesty meant it, the thing might be very true.

But this observation is something out of my present road, and merits to be spoken of by itself.

The number of true Christians will never be known on this side the great bar, where they shall be critically separated. No political arithmetic can make a calculation of the number of true Christians while they live blended with the false ones, since it is not only hard, but impossible, to know them one from another in this world.

We shall perhaps be surprised at the last day to see some people at the right hand of the righteous Judge whom we have condemned with the utmost zeal in our opinions, while we were contemporary with them in life; for charity, as it is generally practised in this world, and mixed with our human

infirmities, such as pride, self-opinion, and personal prejudice, is strangely misguided, and makes us entertain notions of things and people quite different from what they really deserve; and there is hardly any rule to prescribe ourselves, except it be of the text — "In meekness, every one esteeming others better than themselves," which, by the way, is difficult to do.

But though we shall thus see at the great audit a transposition of persons from the station they held in our charity, we shall only thereby see that our judgment was wrong; that God judgeth not as man judgeth, and that we too rashly condemn whom He has thought fit to justify and accept.

Let, then, the number of Christians be more or less, as He that makes them Christians determines, this is not for us to enter into; and this brings me back to what I said before, that though we cannot make Christians, we both can and may, and indeed ought, to open the door to Christianity, that the preaching of God's word, which is the ordinary means of bringing mankind to the knowledge of religion, may be spread over the whole world.

With what vigour do we consult, and how do the labouring heads of the world club together, to form projects, and to raise subscriptions to extend the general commerce of nations into every corner of the world! But 't would pass for a bubble of all bubbles, and a whimsey that none would engage in, if ten millions should be asked to be subscribed for sending a strong fleet and army to conquer heathenism and idolatry, and protect a mission of Christians, to be employed in preaching the Gospel to the poor heathens, say it were on the coast of Coromandel, the island of Ceylon, and country of Malabar, or any of the dominions of the Great Mogul; and yet such an attempt would not only be just, but infi-

nitely advantageous to the people who should undertake it, and to the people of the country on whom the operation should be wrought.

In the occasional discourses I had on this subject, in conversation with men of good judgment and principles, I have been often asked in what manner I would propose to carry on such a conquest as I speak of, and how it should answer the end; and that I may not be supposed to suggest a thing impracticable in itself, or for which no rational scheme might be proposed, I shall make a brief essay, at the manner, in which the conquest I speak of should be, or ought to be, carried on; and if it be considered seriously, the difficulties and perhaps all the reasonable objections might vanish in an instant. I will therefore, first, for the purpose only, suppose that an attempt was made by a Christian nation to conquer and subdue some heathen or Mahometan people at a distance from them, place the conquest where and among whom we will; for example, suppose it was the great island of Madagascar, or that of Ceylon, Borneo in the Indies, or those of Japan, or any other where you please.

I would first suppose the place to be infinitely populous, as any of those countries, though they are islands, are said to be; and because the Japanese are said to be a most sensible, sagacious people, under excellent forms of government, and capable more than ordinarily of receiving impressions, supported by the argument and example of a virtuous and religious conqueror.

For this purpose you must grant me, that the island or islands of Japan were in a situation proper for the undertaking, and that a powerful European army, being landed upon them, had in a great battle, or in divers battles, overthrown all their military force, and had entirely reduced the whole

nation to their power; as, to go back to examples, the Venetians had done by the Turks in the Morea in a former war, or as the Turks did in the isles in Candia, Cyprus, and the like. The short scheme for establishing the government in those countries should be this: —

First, as the war is pointed chiefly against the kingdom of the devil in behalf of the Christian worship, so no quarter should be given to Satan's administration; and as nothing else should willingly be treated with violence, so, indeed, no part of the devil's economy should have any favour, but all the idols should be immediately destroyed and publicly burnt, all the pagodas and temples burnt, and the very face and form of paganism, and the worship attending it, be utterly defaced and destroyed.

Secondly, the priests and dedicated persons of every kind, by whatsoever names or titles known or distinguished, should be at least removed, if not destroyed.

Thirdly, all the exercise of profane and idolatrous rites, ceremonies, worship, festivals, and customs should be abolished entirely, so as by time to be forgotten, and clean wiped out of the minds as well as out of the practice of the people.

This is all the coercion I propose, and less than this cannot be proposed; because, though we may not by arms and force compel men to be religious — because if we do we cannot make them sincere, and so by persecution we only create hypocrites — yet I insist that we may by force, and that with the greatest justice possible, suppress paganism, and the worship of God's enemy the devil, and banish it out of the world; nay, that we ought to do it to the utmost of our power. But I return to the conquest.

The country being thus entirely reduced under Christian government, the inhabitants, if they sub-

mit quietly, ought to be used with humanity and justice, no cruelty, no rigour. They should suffer no oppression, injury, or injustice, that they may not receive evil impressions of the people that are come among them; lest, entertaining an abhorrence of Christians from their evil conduct, cruelty, and injustice, they should entertain an abhorrence of the Christian religion for their sakes; as the poor wretches the Indians in America, who, when they were talked to of the future state, the resurrection of the dead, eternal felicity in heaven, and the like, inquired where the Spaniards went after death, and if any of them went to heaven; and being answered in the affirmative, shook their heads, and desired they might go to hell then, for that they were afraid to think of being in heaven if the Spaniards were there.

A just and generous behaviour to the natives, or at least to such of them as should show themselves willing to submit, would certainly engage them in their interest, and accordingly would in a little while bring them to embrace that truth which dictated such just principles to those who espoused it.

Thus prejudices being removed, the way to instruction would be made the more plain, and then would be the time for Gospel labourers to enter upon the harvest; ministers should be instructed to teach them our language, to exhort them to seek the blessings of religion and of the true God, and so gradually to introduce right principles among them at their own request.

From hence they should proceed to teach all the young children the language spoken by them, who would then be their benefactors rather than conquerors; and a few years wearing the old generation out, the posterity of them and of their conquerors would be all one nation.

In case any rejected the instruction of religious

men and adhered obstinately to his idolatry, and would not be reclaimed by gentle and Christian usage, suitable methods are to be taken with such, that they might not make a religious faction in the country and gain others to side with them in order to recover their liberty, as they might call it, to serve their own gods, that is to say, idols; for it must be for ever as just not to permit them to go back to idolatry by force as it was to pull them from it by force.

By this kind of conquest the Christian religion would be most effectually propagated among innumerable nations of savages and idolaters, and as many people be brought to worship the true God as may be said to do it at this time in the whole Christian world.

This is my crusado; and it would be a war as justifiable on many accounts as any that was ever undertaken in the world, a war that would bring eternal honour to the conquerors and an eternal blessing to the people conquered.

It were easy now to cut out enterprises of this nature for other of the princes of the world than the Czar of Muscovy; and I could lay very rational schemes for such undertakings, and the schemes that could, if thoroughly pursued, never fail of success. For example, an expedition against the Moors of Africa by the French, Spanish, and Italian princes, who daily suffer so much by them, and the last of whom are at perpetual war with them; how easy would it be to those powers to join in a Christian confederacy to plant the Christian religion again in the Numidian and Mauritanian kingdoms — where was once the famous church of Carthage, and from whence thousands of Christians have gone to heaven — the harvest of the primitive labours of St. Cyprian, Tertullian, and many more, whose posterity now bow

their knees to that latest and worst of all impostors, Mahomet.

But unchristian strife was always a bar against the propagation of the Christian religion, and unnatural wars, carried on among the nations I speak of, are made so much the business of the Christian world, that I do not expect in our time to see the advantages taken hold of that the nature of the thing offers. But I am persuaded, and leave it upon record as my settled opinion, that one time or other the Christian powers of Europe shall be inspired from Heaven for such a work, and then the easiness of subduing the kingdom of Africa to the Christian power shall shame the generations past, who had the opportunity so often in their hands, but made no use of it.

Note. — In this part of the subject I am upon, I must acknowledge there is a double argument for a war: (1.) In point of the interfering interests, Europe ought to take possession of those shores, without which it is manifest her commerce is not secured; and indeed, while that part of Africa bordering on the sea is in the hands of robbers, pirates cannot be secured. Now, this is a point of undisputed right, for a war-trade claims the protection of the powers to whom it belongs, and we make no scruple to make war upon one another for the protection of our trade, and it is allowed to be a good reason why we should do so. Why, then, is it not a good reason to make war upon thieves and robbers? If one nation take the ships belonging to another, we immediately reclaim the prize from the captors, and require of the prince that justice be done against the aggressor, who is a breaker of the peace; and if this is refused we make war.

But shall we do thus to Christians, and scruple to make an universal war for the rooting out a race of pirates and rovers, who live by rapine, and are con-

tinually employed, like the lions and tigers of their own Lybia, in devouring their neighbours? This, I say, makes such a war not only just on a religious account, but both just and necessary upon a civil account.

The war, then, being thus proved to be just on other accounts, why should not (2.) the extirpation of idolatry, paganism, and devil-worship be the consequence of the victory? If God be allowed to be the giver of victory, how can it be answered to Him that the victory should not be made use of for the interest and glory of the God of war, from whom it proceeds? But these things are not to be offered to the world till higher principles work in the minds of men in their making war and peace than yet seems to take up their minds.

I was tempted upon this occasion to make an excursion here upon the subject of the very light occasions princes and powers, states and statesmen, make use of for the engaging in war and blood one against another; one for being ill satisfied with the other, and another for preserving the balance of power; this for nothing at all, and that for something next to nothing; and how little concern the blood that is necessarily spilt in these wars produces among them. But this is not a case that will so well bear to be entered upon in a public manner at this time.

All I can add is, I doubt no such zeal for the Christian religion will be found in our days, or perhaps in any age of the world, till Heaven beats the drums itself, and the glorious legions from above come down on purpose to propagate the work, and to reduce the whole world to the obedience of King Jesus — a time which some tell us is not far off, but of which I heard nothing in all my travels and illuminations, no, not one word.

A VISION OF THE ANGELIC WORLD

A VISION OF THE ANGELIC WORLD

THEY must be much taken up with the satisfaction of what they are already, that never spare their thoughts upon the subject of what they shall be.

The place, the company, the employment which we expect to know so much of hereafter, must certainly be well worth our while to inquire after here.

I believe the main interruptions which have been given to these inquiries, and perhaps the reason why those that have entered into them have given them up, and those who have not entered into them have satisfied themselves in the utter neglect, have been the wild chimeric notions, enthusiastic dreams, and unsatisfying ideas, which most of the conceptions of men have led them into about these things.

As I endeavour to conceive justly of these things, I shall likewise endeavour to reason upon them clearly, and, if possible, convey some such ideas of the invisible world to the thoughts of men as may not be confused and indigested, and so leave them darker than I find them.

The locality of heaven or hell is no part of my search; there is doubtless a place reserved for the reception of our souls after death; as there is a state of being for material substances, so there must be a place; if we are to be, we must have a where; the Scripture supports reason in it — Judas is gone

to his place; Dives in hell lifted up his eyes, and saw Lazarus in Abraham's bosom: the locality of bliss and misery seems to be positively asserted in both cases.

But there is not so clear a view of the company as of the place; it is not so easy to inquire into the world of spirits, as it is evident that there are such spirits and such a world. We find the locality of it is natural, but who the inhabitants are is a search of still a sublimer nature, liable to more exception, encumbered with more difficulties, and exposed to much more uncertainty.

I shall endeavour to clear up as much of it as I can, and intimate most willingly how much I rejoice in the expectation that some other inquirers may go farther, till at last all that Providence has thought fit to discover of that part may be perfectly known.

The discoveries in the Scripture which lead to this are innumerable, but the positive declaration of it seems to be declined. When our Saviour walking on the sea frighted His disciples, and they cried out, what do we find terrified them? Truly they thought they had seen a spirit. One would have thought such men as they, who had the vision of God manifest in the flesh, should not have been so much surprised if they had seen a spirit, that is to say, seen an apparition, for to see a spirit seems to be an allusion, not an expression to be used literally, a spirit being not visible by the organ of human sight.

But what if it had been a spirit? If it had been a good spirit, what had they to fear? And if a bad spirit, what would crying out have assisted them? When people cry out in such cases, it is either for help, and then they cry to others; or for mercy, and then they cry to the subject of their terror to spare them. Either way it was either the foolishest or

the wickedest thing that ever was done by such grave men as the apostles; for if it was a good spirit as before, they had no need to cry out; and if it was a bad one, who did they cry to? for 't is evident they did not pray to God, or cross and bless themselves, as was afterwards the fashion; but they cried out, that is to say, they either cried out for help, which was great nonsense to call to man for help against the devil; or they cried to the spirit they saw, that it might not hurt them, which was, in short, neither less nor more than praying to the devil.

This put me in mind of the poor savages in many of the countries of America and Africa, who, really instructed by their fear, that is to say, by mere nature, worship the devil that he may not hurt them.

Here I must digress a little, and make a transition from the story of the spirit to the strange absurdities of men's notions at that time, and particularly of those upon whom the first impressions of Christ's preachings were wrought; and if it be looked narrowly into, one cannot but wonder what strange ignorant people even the disciples themselves were at first; and indeed their ignorance continued a great while, even to after the death of Christ Himself — witness the foolish talk of the two disciples going to Emmaus. It is true they were wiser afterwards when they were better taught; but the Scripture is full of the discoveries of their ignorance, as in the notions of sitting at His right hand and His left in His kingdom, asked for by Zebedee's children; no doubt but the good woman their mother thought one of her sons should be lord treasurer there, and the other lord chancellor, and she could not but think those places their due when she saw them in such favour with Him here. Just so in their notion of seeing a spirit here, which put them into

such a fright, and indeed they might be said, according to our dull way of thinking, to be frighted out of their wits; for had their senses been in exercise, they would either have rejoiced in the appearance of a good angel, and stood still to hear his message as from Heaven, or prayed to God to deliver them out of the hands of the devil on their supposing it, as above, to be a vision from hell.

But I come to the subject. It is evident that the notion of spirits, and their intermeddling with the affairs of men, and even of their appearing to men, prevailed so universally in those ages of the world, that even God's own people, who were instructed from Himself, believed it, nor is there anything in all the New Testament institution to contradict it, though many things to confirm it; such particularly as the law against what is called a familiar spirit, which was esteemed no better or worse than a conversing with the devil, that is to say, with some of the evil spirits of the world I speak of.

The witch of Endor, and the story of an apparition of an old man personating Samuel, which is so plainly asserted in Scripture, and which the learned opposers of these notions have spent so much weak pains to disturb our imaginations about, yet assure us that such apparitions are not inconsistent with Nature or with religion; nay, the Scripture allows this woman to *paw waw*, as the Indians in America call it, and conjure for the raising this spectre, and when it is come, allows it to speak a great prophetic truth, foretelling the king, in all its terrible particulars, what was to happen to him, and what did befall him the very next day.

Either this appearance must be a good spirit or a bad; if it was a good spirit it was an angel, as it is expressed in another place of the Apostle Peter, when he knocked at the good people's door in

Jerusalem (Acts xii. 15); and then it supports my opinion of the spirits unembodied conversing with and taking care of the spirits embodied; if it was an evil spirit, then they must grant God to be making a prophet of the devil, and making him personate Samuel to foretell things to come; permitting Satan to speak in the first person of God's own prophet, and indeed to preach the justice of God's dealing with Saul for rejecting His prophet Samuel; which, in short, is not a little odd, putting the spirit of God into the mouth of the devil, and making Satan a preacher of righteousness.

When I was in my retirement I had abundance of strange notions of my seeing apparitions there, and especially when I happened to be abroad by moonshine, when every bush looked like a man, and every tree like a man on horseback; and I so prepossessed myself with it that I scarce durst look behind me for a good while, and after that durst not go abroad at all at night; nay, it grew upon me to such a degree at last, that I as firmly believed I saw several times real shapes and appearances, as I do now really believe and am assured that it was all hypochondriac delusion.

But, however, that the reader may see how far the power of imagination may go, and judge for me whether I showed any more folly and simplicity than other men might do, I 'll repeat some little passages, which for a while gave me very great disturbances, and every one shall judge for me whether they might not have been deluded in the like circumstances as well as I.

The first case was, when I crept into the dark cave in the valley, where the old goat lay just expiring, which, wherever it happened, is a true history, I assure you.

When first I was stopped by the noise of this

poor dying creature, you are to observe that the voice was not only like the voice of a man, but even articulate, only that I could not form any words from it; and what did that amount to more or less than this, namely, that it spoke, but only it was in a language that I did not understand. If it was possible to describe the surprise of my spirits on that occasion, I would do it here, how all my blood run, or rather stood still, chilled in my veins, how a cold dew of sweat sat on my forehead, how my joints, like Belshazzar's knees, shook one against another, and how, as I said, my hair would have lifted off my hat if I had had one on my head.

But this is not all. After the first noise of the creature, which was a faint, dying kind of imperfect bleating, not unusual, as I found afterward; I say, after this he fetched two or three deep sighs, as lively, and as like human, as it is possible to imagine, as I have also said.

These were so many confirmations of my surprise, besides the sight of his two glaring eyes, and carried it up to the extreme of fright and amazement; how I afterwards conquered this childish beginning, and mustered up courage enough to go into the place with a firebrand for light, and how I was presently satisfied with seeing the creature whose condition made all the little accidental noises appear rational, I have already said.

But I must acknowledge that this real surprise left some relics or remains behind it that did not wear quite off a great while, though I struggled hard with them; the vapours that were raised at first were never so laid but that on every trifling occasion they returned; and I saw, nay, I felt apparitions as plainly and distinctly as ever I felt or saw any real substance in my life.

The like was the case with me before that, when

I first found the print of a man's foot upon the sand, by the seaside, on the north part of the island.

And these, I say, having left my fancy a little peevish and wayward, I had frequently some returns of these vapours, on differing occasions, and sometimes even without occasion; nothing but mere hypochondriac whimsies, fluttering of the blood, and rising of vapours, which nobody could give any account of but myself.

For example, it was one night, after my having seen some odd appearances in the air, of no great significance, that coming home, and being in bed, but not asleep, I felt a pain in one of my feet, after which it came to a kind of numbness in my foot, which a little surprised me, and after that a kind of tingling in my blood, as if it had been some distemper running up my leg.

On a sudden I felt, as it were, something alive lie upon me, as if it had been a dog lying upon my bed, from my knee downwards, about half way up my leg, and immediately afterwards I felt it heavier, and felt it as plainly roll itself upon me upwards upon my thigh, for I lay on one side, I say, as if it had been a creature lying upon me with all his weight, and turning his body upon me.

It was so lively and sensible to me, and I remember it so perfectly well, though it is now many years ago, that my blood chills and flutters about my heart at the very writing it. I immediately flung myself out of my bed and flew to my musket, which stood always ready at my hand, and naked as I was, laid about me upon the bed in the dark, and everywhere else that I could think of where anybody might stand or lie, but could find nothing. "Lord deliver me from an evil spirit," said I, "what can this be?" And being tired with groping about, and having broke two or three of my earthen pots

with making blows here and there to no purpose, I went to light my candle, for my lamp which I used to burn in the night either had not been lighted, or was gone out.

When I lighted a candle, I could easily see there was no living creature in the place with me but the poor parrot, who was waked and frighted, and cried out, "Hold your tongue," and "What 's the matter with you?" Which words he learned of me, from my frequent saying so to him, when he used to make his ordinary wild noise and screaming that I did not like.

The more I was satisfied that there was nothing in the room, at least to be seen, the more another concern came upon me. "Lord!" says I aloud, "this is the devil!" "Hold your tongue," says Poll. I was so mad at the bird, though the creature knew nothing of the matter, that if he had hung near me, I believe I should have killed him. I put my clothes on, and sat me down, for I could not find in my heart to go to bed again, and as I sat down, "I am terribly frighted," said I. "What 's the matter with you?" says Poll. "You toad," said I, "I 'd knock your brains out if you were here." "Hold your tongue," says he again, and then fell to chattering "Robin Crusoe," and "Poor Robin Crusoe," as he used to do.

Had I been in any reach of a good temper, it had been enough to have composed me, but I was quite gone; I was fully possessed with a belief that it was the devil, and I prayed most heartily to God to be delivered from the power of the evil spirit.

After some time I composed myself a little, and went to bed again, and lying just in the posture as I was in before, I felt a little of the tingling in my blood which I felt before, and I resolved to lie still, let it be what it would; it came up as

high as my knee, as before, but no higher; and now I began to see plainly that it was all a distemper, that it was something paralytic, and that affected the nerves; but I had not either experience of such a thing, or knowledge of diseases enough to be fully satisfied of the nature of them, and whether anything natural, any numbness or dead palsy affecting one part of the thigh, could feel as that did, till some months after that I felt something of the very same again at my first lying down in my bed for three or four nights together, which at first gave me a little concern as a distemper, but at last gave me such satisfaction, that the first was nothing but the same thing in a higher degree; that the pleasure of knowing it was only a disease was far beyond the concern at the danger of it, though a dead palsy to one in my condition might reasonably have been one of the most frightful things in Nature, since, having nobody to help me, I must have inevitably perished for mere want of food, not being able to go from place to place to fetch it.

But to go back to the case in hand, and to the apprehension I had been in all the several months that passed between the first of this and the last, I went about with a melancholy, heavy heart, fully satisfied that the devil had been in my room, and lay upon my bed.

Sometimes I would try to argue myself a little out of it, asking myself whether it was reasonable to imagine the devil had nothing else to do than to come thither, and only lie down upon me, and go away about his business, and say not one word to me; what end it could answer; and whether I thought the devil was really busied about such trifles; or whether he had not employment enough of a higher nature, so that such a thing as that could be worth his while.

But still, then, I was answered with my own thoughts returning thus — What could it be? Or, if it was not a devil, what was it? This I could not answer by any means at all; and so I still sunk under the belief that it was the devil, and nothing but the devil.

You may be sure, while I had this fancy in my head, I was of course overrun with the vapours, and had all the hypochondriac fancies that ever any melancholy head could entertain; and what with ruminating on the print of a foot upon the sand, and the weight of the devil upon me in my bed, I made no difficulty to conclude that the old gentleman really visited the place; and, in a word, it had been easy to have possessed me, if I had continued so much longer, that it was an enchanted island, that there were a million of evil spirits in it, and that the devil was lord of the manor.

I scarce heard the least noise, near or far off, but I started, and expected to see a devil; every distant bush upon a hill, if I did not particularly remember it before, was a man, and every stump an apparition; and I scarce went twenty yards together, by night or by day, without looking behind me.

Sometimes, indeed, I took a little heart, and would say, "Well, let it be the devil if it will! God is master of the devil, and he can do me no hurt unless he is permitted; he can be nowhere but He that made him is there too;" and, as I said afterwards, when I was frighted with the old goat in a cave, "He is not fit to live all alone in such an island for twenty years that would be afraid to see the devil."

But all these things lasted but a short while, and the vapours that were raised at first were not to be so easily laid; for, in a word, it was not mere imagination, but it was the imagination raised up to dis-

ease; nor did it ever quite wear off till I got my man Friday with me, of whom I have said so much; and then, having company to talk to, the hypo wore off, and I did not see any more devils after that.

Before I leave this part, I cannot but give a caution to all vapourish, melancholy people, whose imaginations run this way; I mean about seeing the devil, apparitions, and the like; namely, that they should never look behind them, and over their shoulders, as they go upstairs, or look into the corners and holes of rooms with a candle in their hands, or turn about to see who may be behind them in any walks or dark fields, lanes, or the like; for let such know, they will see the devil whether he be there or no; nay, they will be so persuaded that they do see him, that their very imagination will be a devil to them wherever they go.

But after all this is said, let nobody suggest that because the brain-sick fancy, the vapourish hypochondriac imagination represents spectres and spirits to us, and makes apparitions for us, that therefore there are no such things as spirits, both good and evil, any more than we should conceive that there is no devil, because we do not see him.

The devil has witnesses of his being and nature, just as God Himself has of His; they are not indeed so visible or so numerous, but we are all able to bring evidence of the existence of the devil from our own frailties, as we are to bring evidence of the existence of God from the faculties of our souls, and from the contexture of our bodies.

As our propensity to evil rather than good is a testimony of the original depravity of human nature, so the harmony between the inclination and the occasion is a testimony which leaves the presence of the evil spirit with us out of question.

Not that the devil is always the agent in our

temptations, for though the devil is a very diligent fellow, and always appears ready to fall in with the allurement, yet the Scripture clears him, and we must do so too, of being the main tempter; 't is our own corrupt, debauched inclination, which is the first moving agent; and therefore the Scripture says, "A man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts, and enticed." The devil, who, as I said, is a very diligent fellow in the infernal work, and is always ready to forward the mischief, is also a very cunning fellow, and knows how most dexterously to suit alluring objects to the allurable dispositions; to procure ensnaring things, and lay them in the way of the man whom he finds so easily to be ensnared; and he never fails to prompt all the mischief he can, full of stratagem and art, to ensnare us by the help of our corrupt affections, and these are called "Satan's devices."

But having charged Satan home in that part, I must do the devil that justice as to own that he is the most slandered, most abused creature alive; thousands of crimes we lay to his charge that he is not guilty of; thousands of our own infirmities we load him with which he has no hand in; and thousands of our sins, which, as bad as he is, he knows nothing of; calling him our tempter, and pretending we did so and so as the devil would have it, when on the contrary the devil had no share in it, and we were only led away of our own lusts, and enticed.

But now, having made this digression in the devil's defence, I return to the main question, that of the being of the devil, and of evil spirits; this I believe, there is no room to doubt of; but this, as I have observed, is not the thing; these are not the spirits I am speaking of, but I shall come directly to what I mean, and speak plain without any possibility of being misunderstood.

I make no question but that there is not only a world of spirits, but that there is a certain knowledge of it, though to us impossible as to the manner of it; there is a certain converse between the world of spirits, and the spirits in this world; that is to say, between spirits uncased or unembodied and souls of men embodied or cased up in flesh and blood, as we all are on this side death.

It is true that we cannot describe this converse of spirits, as to the way of it, the manner of the communication, or how things are mutually conveyed from one to another. How intelligences are given or received, we know not; we know but little of their being conveyed this way from the spirits unembodied to ours that are in life; and of their being conveyed that way, namely, from us to them — of that we know nothing. The latter certainly is done without the help of the organ, the former is conveyed by the understanding, and the retired faculties of the soul, of which we can give very little account.

"For spirits, without the help of voice, converse."

Let me, however, give, as reasons for my opinion, some account of the consequences of this converse of spirits; I mean, such as are quite remote from what we call apparition or appearance of spirits; and I omit these, because I know they are objected much against, and they bear much scandal from the frequent impositions of our fancies and imaginations upon our judgments and understandings, as above.

But the more particular discoveries of this converse of spirits, and which to me are undeniable, are such as follows, namely, —

Dreams	Impulses	Involuntary sadness, &c.
Voices	Hints	
Noises	Apprehensions	

Dreams are dangerous things to talk of; and we have such dreaming about them, that indeed the least encouragement to lay any weight upon them is presently carried away by a sort of people that dream waking, and that run into such wild extremes about them, that indeed we ought to be very cautious what we say of them.

It is certain dreams of old were the ways by which God Himself was pleased to warn men, as well what to do, as what not to do; what services to perform, what evils to shun. Joseph, the husband of the blessed Virgin Mary, was appeared to in both these (Matt. ii. 13, 19). He was directed of God, in a dream, to go into Egypt; and he was bid return out of Egypt in a dream; and in the same chapter, the wise men of the East were warned of God in a dream to depart into their own country another way to avoid the fury of Herod.

Now as this, and innumerable instances through the whole Scripture, confirm that God did once make use of this manner to convey knowledge and instruction to men, I wish I could have this question well answered, viz., Why are we now to direct people to take no notice of their dreams?

But farther; it appears that this was not only the method God Himself took by His immediate power, but it is evident He made use of it by the ministry of spirits; the Scripture says in both the cases of Joseph above named, that the "angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream." Now every unembodied spirit is an angel of the Lord in some sense; and as angels and spirits may be the same thing in respect of this influence upon us in dreams, so it is still; and when any notice for good, or warning against evil, is given us in a dream, I think 't is no arrogance at all for us to say the angel of the Lord appeared to us in a dream; or to say some good

spirit gave me warning of this in a dream; — take this which way you will.

That I may support this with such undeniable arguments, drawn from examples of the fact, as no man will, or reasonably can oppose, I first appeal to the experience of observing people; I mean, such people as observe these things without a superstitious dependence upon the signification of them, that look upon dreams but with such a moderate regard to them as may direct to a right use of them. The question I would ask of such is, whether they have never found any remarkable event of their lives so evidently foretold them by a dream, as that it must of necessity be true that some invisible being foresaw the event, and gave them notice of it? And that, had that notice been listened to, and the natural prudence used which would have been used if it had been certainly discovered, that evil event might have been prevented?

I would ask others whether they have not, by dreams, been so warned of evil really approaching, as that, taking the hint, and making use of the caution given in those dreams, the evil has been avoided? If I may speak my own experience, I must take leave to say, that I never had any capital mischief befall me in my life but I have had notice of it by a dream; and if I had not been that thoughtless, unbelieving creature, which I now would caution other people against, I might have taken many a warning, and avoided many of the evils that I afterwards fell into merely by a total obstinate neglect of those dreams.

In like manner I have in some of the greatest distresses of my life been encouraged to believe firmly and fully that I should one time or other be delivered; and I must acknowledge, that in my greatest and most hopeless banishment I had such frequent

dreams of my deliverance, that I always entertained a firm and satisfying belief that my last days would be better than my first; all which has effectually come to pass.

From which I cannot determine, as I know some do, that all dreams are mere dozings of a delirious head, delusions of a waking devil, and relics of the day's thoughts and perplexities, or pleasures. Nor do I see any period of time fixed between the two opposite circumstances — namely, when dreams were to be esteemed the voice of God and when the delusion of the devil.

I know some have struggled hard to fix that particular article, and to settle it as a thing going hand in hand with the Jewish institutions; as if the oracle ceasing in the temple with the consummation of the typical law, all the methods which Heaven was pleased to take in the former times for revealing His will to men were to cease also at the same time, and the Gospel revelation being fully and effectually supplied by the mission of the Holy Spirit, dreams and all the uses and significations of dreams were at an end, and the esteem and regard to the warnings and instructions of dreams was to expire also.

But the Scripture is point-blank against this in the history of fact relating to Ananias and the conversion of St. Paul, and in the story of St. Peter and Cornelius, the devout centurion at Antioch; both of them eminent instances of God's giving notice of His pleasure to men by the interposition or medium of a dream. The first of these is in Acts ix. 10: "There was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias. To him said the Lord in a vision," &c.; the words spoken in this vision to Ananias, directing to go to seek out one Saul of Tarsus, go on thus (ver. 12), "and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in."

The other passage is of St. Peter and Cornelius the centurion (Acts x. vers. 3, 10, 11). In the third verse it is said, Cornelius, fasting and praying, saw a vision, which afterwards, in the 22nd verse, is called an holy angel warning him; in the 30th verse it is said, "a man stood before me in bright clothing;" at the same time (ver. 10) it is said, St. Peter was praying and fell into a trance — this we all agreed to be a possession of sleep, or a deep sleep — and in this trance it is said he saw heaven opened; that is to say, he dreamed that he saw heaven opened; it could be nothing else, for no interpreters will offer to insist that heaven was really opened; also, the hearing a voice (vers. 13, 15) must be in a dream. Thus 't is apparent the will of God concerning what we are to do or not to do, what is or is not to befall us, is and has been thus conveyed by vision or dream since the expiration of the Levitical dispensation, and since the mission of the Holy Ghost.

When, then, did it cease? And if we do not know when it ceased, how then are we sure it is at all ceased, and what authority have we now to reject all dreams or visions of the night, as they are called, more than formerly?

I will not say but there may be more nocturnal delusions now in the world than there were in those times; and perhaps the devil may have gained more upon mankind in these days than he had then, though we are not let into those things enough to know whether it is so or not; nor do we know that there were not as many unsignifying dreams in those days as now, and perhaps as much to be said against depending upon them; though I think there is not one word in Scripture said to take off the regard men might give to dreams, or to lessen the weight which they might lay on them.

The only text that I think looks like it is the flout Joseph's brethren put upon him, or threw out at him, when they were speaking of him with contempt (Gen. xxxvii. 19), "Behold, this dreamer cometh;" and again (ver. 20), "Let us slay him and cast him into some pit, and we shall see what will become of his dreams."

This, indeed, looks a little like the present language against dreams; but even this is sufficiently rebuked in the consequences, for those dreams of Joseph did come all to pass, and proving the superior influence such things have upon the affairs of men, in spite of all the contempt they can cast upon them.

The maxim I have laid down to myself for my conduct in this affair is, in few words, that we should not lay too great stress upon dreams, and yet not wholly neglect them.

I remember I was once present where a long dispute was warmly carried on between two persons of my acquaintance upon this very subject, the one a layman, the other a clergyman, but both very pious and religious persons. The first thought there was no heed at all to be given to dreams, that they could have no justifiable original, that they were delusions and no more, that it was atheistical to lay any stress upon them, and that he could give such objections against them as that no man of good principles could avoid being convinced by; that as to their being a communication from the invisible to the visible world 't was a chimera, and that he saw no foundation for believing any reality in such a thing, unless I would set up for a Popish *limbus*, or purgatory, which had no foundation in the Scripture.

(1.) He said, if dreams were from the agency of any prescient being, the notices would be more direct and the discoveries clear — not by allegories and

emblematic fancies, expressing things imperfect and dark. For to what purpose should spirits unembodied sport with mankind, warning him of approaching mischiefs by the most ridiculous enigmas, figures, &c., leaving the wretch to guess what awaited him, though of the utmost consequence, and to perish if he mistook the meaning of it; and leaving him sometimes perfectly at a loss to know whether he was right or wrong, and without any rule or guide to walk by in the most difficult cases?

(2.) He objected, that with the notice of evil, suppose it to be rightly understood, there was not given a power to avoid it, and therefore it could not be alleged that the notice was any way kind, and that it was not likely to proceed from a beneficent spirit, but merely fortuitous, and of no significancy.

(3.) He objected, that if such notices as those were of such weight, why were they not constant, but that sometimes they were given and sometimes omitted, though cases were equally important? and that, therefore, they did not seem to proceed from any agent whose actions were to be fairly accounted for.

(4.) He said, that oftentimes we had very distinct and formal dreams, without any signification at all, that we could neither know anything probable or anything rational of them; and that it would be profane to suggest that to come from heaven which was too apparently foolish and inconsistent.

(5.) As men were not always thus warned, or supplied with notices of good or evil, so all men were not alike supplied with them; and what reason could we give why one man or one woman should not have the same hints as another?

The clergyman gave distinct answers to all these objections, and to me, I confess, very satisfactory; whether they may be so to those that read them,

is no concern of mine; let every one judge for himself.

(1.) He said, that as to the signification of dreams, and the objections against them, because dark and doubtful, that they are expressed generally by hieroglyphical representations, similes, allusions, and figurative emblematic ways of expressing things, was true, and that by this means, for want of interpretation, the thing was not understood, and consequently the evil not shunned. This, he said, was the only difficulty that remained to him in the case, but that he could see nothing in it against the signification of them, because thus it was before, for dreams were often allegoric and allusive when they were evidently from God, and what the end and design of Providence in that was, we could not pretend to inquire.

(2.) To the second he said, we charged God foolishly, to say He had given the notice of evil without the power to avoid it, which he denied, and affirmed that, if any one had not power to avoid the evil, it was no notice to him that it was want of giving due heed to that notice, not for want of the notice being sufficient that any evil followed, and that men first neglected themselves, and then charged the Judge of all the earth with not doing right.

(3.) Likewise he said, the complaint that these notices were not constant, was unjust, for he doubted not but they were so, but our discerning was crazed and clouded by our negligence in not taking due notice of it; that we hookwinked our understanding by pretending dreams were not to be regarded; and the voice really spoke, but we refused to hear, being negligent of our own good.

(4.) In the same sense he answered the fourth, and said it was a mistake to say that sometimes dreams had no import at all; he said it was only to be said, none that we could perceive the reason of, which was

owing to our blindness and supine negligence, to be secure at one time, and our heads too much alarmed at another, so that the spirit which we might be said to be conversing with in a dream was constantly and equally kind and careful; but our powers not always in the same state of action, nor equally attentive to or retentive of the hints that were given, or things might be rendered more or less intelligible to us, as the powers of our soul were more or less dozed or somniated with the oppression of vapours from the body, which occasions sleep; for though the soul cannot be said to sleep itself, yet how far its operations may be limited, and the understanding prescribed by the sleepiness of the body, says he, I will not undertake; let the anatomist judge of it who can account for the contexture of the parts, and for their operations, which I cannot answer to.

(5.) As to the last question, why people are not equally supplied with such warnings, he said, this seemed to be no question at all in the case, for Providence itself might have some share in the direction of it, and then that Providence might perhaps be limited by some superior direction, the same that guides all the solemn dispositions of Nature, and was a wind blowing where it listeth; that as to the converse of spirits, though he allowed the thing itself, yet he did not tie it up to a stated course of conversing, that it should be the same always, and to all people, and on all occasions, but that it seemed to be spontaneous, and consequently arbitrary, as if the spirits unembodied had it left to them to converse as they thought fit, how, where, and with whom they would; that all he answered for in that discourse was for the thing itself, that such a thing there was, but why there was so much of it, or why no more, was none of his business, and he believed a discovery was not yet made to mankind of that part.

I thought it would be much to the purpose to remark this opinion of another man, because it corresponded so exactly with my own; but I have not done with my friend, for he led me into another inquiry, which, indeed, I had not taken so much notice of before, and this was introduced by the following question: —

"You seem," says he, "to be very inquisitive about dreams, and to doubt — though I think you have no reason for it — of the reality of the world of spirits, which dreams are such an evidence of. Pray," says he, "what think you of waking dreams, trances, visions, noises, voices, hints, impulses, and all these waking testimonies of an invisible world, and of the communication that there is between us and them, which are generally entertained with our eyes open?"

This led me into many reflections upon past things, which I had been witness to as well in myself as in other people, and particularly in my former solitudes, when I had many occasions to mark such things as these, and I could not but entertain a free conversation with my friend upon this subject as often as I had opportunity, of which I must give some account.

I had one day been conversing so long with him upon the common received notions of the planets being habitable, and of a diversity of worlds, that I think verily I was for some days like a man transported into these regions myself. Whether my imagination is more addicted to realising the things I talk of, as if they were in view, I know not, or whether by the power of the converse of spirits I speak of I was at that time enabled to entertain clearer ideas of the invisible world, I really cannot tell, but I certainly made a journey to all those supposed habitable bodies in my imagination, and I know not but it may be very useful to tell you what

I met with in my way, and what the wiser I am for the discovery; whether you will be the wiser for the relation at second hand, I cannot answer for that.

I could make a long discourse here of the power of imagination, and how bright the ideas of distant things may be found in the mind when the soul is more than ordinarily agitated. It is certain the extraordinary intelligence conveyed in this manner is not always regular; sometimes it is exceeding confused, and the brain being not able to digest it, turns round too fast; this tends to lunacy and distraction, and the swiftness of the motion these ideas come in with occasions a commotion in Nature; the understanding is mobbed with them, disturbed, runs from one thing to another, and digests nothing; this is well expressed in our common way of talking of a madman, namely, that his head is turned. Indeed, I can liken it to nothing so well as to the wheels of a windmill, which, if the sails or wings are set, and the wind blow a storm, run round so fast, that they will set all on fire if a skilful hand be not ready to direct and manage it.

But not to enter upon this whimsical description of lunacy, which, perhaps, may be nobody's opinion but my own, I proceed thus, that when the head is strong, and capable of the impressions, when the understanding is empowered to digest the infinite variety of ideas which present to it from the extended fancy, then, I say, the soul of man is capable to act strangely upon the invisibles in Nature, and upon futurity, realising everything to itself in such a lively manner, that what it thus thinks of it really sees, speaks to, hears, converses with, &c., as lively as if the substance was really before his face; and this is what I mean by those that dream waking, by visions, trances, or what you please to call them, for

it is not necessary to this part that the man should be asleep.

I return to my share of these things. It was after my conversing with my learned friend about the heavenly bodies, the motion, the distances, and the bulk of the planets, their situation, and the orbits they move in; the share of light, heat, and moisture which they enjoy; their respect to the sun; their influences upon us; and, at last, the possibility of their being habitable, with all the arcana of the skies; it was on this occasion, I say, that my imagination, always given to wander, took a flight of its own, and as I have told you that I had an invincible inclination to travel, so I think I travelled as sensibly, to my understanding, over all the mazes and wastes of infinite space, in quest of those things, as ever I did over the deserts of Karakathie, and the uninhabited wastes of Tartary, and perhaps may give as useful an account of my journey.

When first my fancy raised me up in the confines of this vast abyss, and having now travelled through the misty regions of the atmosphere could look down as I mounted, and see the world below me, it is scarcely possible to imagine how little, how mean, how despicable everything looked. Let any man but try this experiment of himself, and he shall certainly find the same thing; let him but fix his thoughts so intensely upon what is and must necessarily be seen in a stage or two higher than where we now live, removed from the particular converse with the world, as to realise to his imagination what he can suppose to be there, he shall find all that is below him, as distant objects always do, lessen in his mind as they do in his sight.

Could a man subsist without a supply of food, and live but one mile in perpendicular height from the surface, he would despise life and the world at

such a rate that he would hardly come down to have it be all his own; the soul of man is capable of being continually elevated above the very thoughts of human things — is capable of travelling up to the highest and most distant regions of light, but when it does, as it rises above the earthly globe, so the things of this globe sink to him.

When I was at first lifted up in my imaginary travels, this was the first thing of moment I remarked, namely, how little the world and everything about it seemed to me. I am not given to preach, or drawing long corollaries, as the learned call them, but I recommend it to my friends to observe that, could we always look upon the things of life with the same eyes as we shall do when we come to the edge of time, when one eye can as it were look back on the world, and the other look forward into eternity, we should save ourselves the trouble of much repentance, and should scorn to touch many of those things in which we now fancy our chief felicity is laid up; believe me, we shall see more with half an eye then, and judge better at first glance, than we can now, with all our pretended wisdom and penetration. In a word, all the passions and affections suffer a general change upon such a view, and what we desire before, we contemn them with abhorrence.

Having begun to soar, the world was soon out of sight, unless that as I rose higher, and could look at her in a due position as to the sun, I could see her turned into a moon, and shine by reflection. "Ay, shine on," said I, "with thy borrowed rays, for thou hast but very few of thy own."

When my fancy had mounted me thus beyond the vestiges of the earth, and leaving the atmosphere behind me, I had set my firm foot upon the verge of infinite, when I drew no breath, but subsisted upon

pure ether, it is not possible to express fully the vision of the place. First, you are to conceive of sight as unconfined, and you see here at least the whole solar system at one view. Nor is your sight bounded by the narrow circumference of one sun and its attendants of planets, whose orbits are appropriated to its proper system, but above and beyond, and on every side, you see innumerable suns, and, attending on them, planets, satellites, and inferior lights, proper to their respective systems, and all these moving in their subordinate circumstances, without the least confusion, with glorious light and splendour inconceivable.

In this first discovery 't is most natural to observe how plainly it is to be seen that the reason of the creation of such immense bodies as the sun, stars, planets, and moons, in the great circle of the lower heaven, is far from being to be found in the study of Nature on the surface of our earth, but he that will see thoroughly why God has formed the heavens, the work of His hands, and the moon and the stars which He has made, must soar up higher, and then, as he will see with other eyes than he did before, so he will see the God of Nature has formed an infinite variety which we know nothing of, and that all the creatures are a reason to one another for their creation.

I could not forget myself, however, when I was got up thus high; I say, I could not but look back upon the state of man in this life, how confined from these discoveries, how vilely employed in biting and devouring, envying and maligning one another, and all for the vilest trifles that can be conceived.

But I was above it all here, and all those things which appeared so afflicting before gave me not the least concern now; for the soul being gone of this errand had quite different notices of the whole state

of life, and was neither influenced by passions or affections, as it was before.

Here I saw into many things by the help of a sedate inquiry, that we can entertain little or no notion of in a state of common superficial life, and I desire to leave a few remarks of this imaginary journey, as I did of my ordinary travels.

When I came, I say, to look into the solar system as I have hinted, I saw perfectly the emptiness of our modern notions that the planets were habitable worlds, and shall give a brief description of the case, that others may see it too, without the necessity of taking so long a journey.

And first for the word habitable: I understand the meaning of it to be, that the place it is spoken of is qualified for the subsistence and existence of man and beast, and to preserve the vegetative and sensitive life, and you may depend upon it that none of the planets, except the moon, are in this sense habitable; and the moon, a poor, little, watery, damp thing, not above as big as Yorkshire, neither worth being called a world, nor capable of rendering life comfortable to mankind, if indeed supportable; and if you will believe one's mind capable of seeing at so great a distance, I assure you I did not see man, woman, or child there in all my contemplative voyage to it: my meaning is, I did not see the least reason to believe there was or could be any there. As to the rest of the planets, I will take them in their order. Saturn (the remotest from the sun, which is in the centre of the system) is a vast extended globe, of a substance cold and moist; its greatest degree of light is never so much as our greatest darkness may be said to be in clear weather, and its cold insufferable; and if it were a body composed of the same elements as our earth, its sea would be all brass, and its earth all iron; that is to

say, both would be continually frozen, as the north pole in the winter solstice. What man or men, and of what nature, could inhabit this frigid planet, unless the Creator must be supposed to have created animal creatures for the climate, not the climate for the creatures? All the notions of Saturn's being a habitable world are contrary to nature, and incongruous with sense; for Saturn is at so infinite a distance from the sun, that it has not above one-ninetieth part of the light and heat that we enjoy on our earth; so that the light there may be said to be much less than our starlight, and the cold ninety times greater than the coldest day in our winter.

Jupiter is in the same predicament; his constitution, however, in its degree much milder than Saturn, yet certainly is not qualified for human bodies to subsist, having only one twenty-seventh part of the light and heat that we enjoy here; consequently its light is at best as dim as our twilight, and its heat so little in the summer of its situation as to be as far from comfortable as it is in its winter situation insupportable.

Mars, if you will believe our ancient philosophers, is a fiery planet in the very disposition of its influence, as well as by the course of its motion; and yet even here the light is not above one-half, and its heat one-third of ours. And on the other hand, as Saturn is cold and moist, so this planet is hot and dry, and would admit no habitation of man, through the manifest intemperance of the air, as well as want of light to make it comfortable, and moisture to make it fruitful; for by the nature of the planet, as well as by clear-sighted observation, there is never any rain, vapour, fog, or dew in that planet.

Venus and Mercury are in the extreme the other way, and would destroy nature by their heat and

dazzling light, as the other would by their darkness and cold; so that you may depend upon it I could see very clearly that all these bodies were neither inhabited or habitable; and the earth only, as we call it, being seated between these intemperances, appeared habitable, surrounded with an atmosphere to defend it from the invasion of the inconsistent ether, in which perspiration could not be performed by the lungs, and by which the needful vapour it sends forth is preserved from dissipating into the waste and abyss, and is condensed, and timely returns in showers of rain to moisten, cool, and nourish the exhausted earth.

It is true the way I went was no common road, yet I found abundance of passengers going to and fro here, and particularly innumerable armies of good and evil spirits, who all seemed busily employed, and continually upon the wing, as if some expresses passed between the earth, which in this part of my travels I place below me, and some country infinitely beyond all that I could reach the sight of; for, by the way, though I take upon me in this sublime journey to see a great deal of the invisible world, yet I was not arrived to a length to see into any part of the world of light beyond it all. That vision is beyond all, and I pretend to say nothing of it here, except this only, that a clear view of this part with optics unclouded is a great step to prepare the mind for a look into the other.

But to return to my station in the highest created world; flatter not yourselves that those regions are uninhabited because the planets appear to be so. No, no; I assure you this is that world of spirits, or at least is a world of spirits.

Here I saw a clear demonstration of Satan being the prince of the power of the air; 't is in this boundless waste he is confined, whether it be his busy rest-

less inclination has posted him here, that he may affront God in His government of the world, and do injury to mankind in mere envy to his happiness, as the famed Mr. Milton says it, or whether it is that by the eternal decree of Providence he is appointed to be man's continual disturber for Divine ends, to us unknown; this I had not wandered far enough to be informed of, those secrets being lodged much higher than imagination itself ever travelled.

But here, I say, I found Satan keeping his court, or camp we may call it, which we please. The innumerable legions that attended his immediate service were such that it is not at all to be wondered that he supplied every angle of this world, and had his work going forward, not in every country only, but even in every individual inhabitant of it, with all the dexterity and application imaginable.

This sight gave me a just idea of the devil as a tempter, but really let me into a secret which I did not so well know before, or at least did not consider, namely, that the devil is not capable of doing half the mischief in the world that we lay to his charge. That he works by engines and agents, stratagems and art, is true, and a great deal is owing to his vigilance and application, for he is a very diligent fellow in his calling. But 't is plain his power is not so great as we imagine; he can only prompt to the crime — he cannot force us to commit it; so that if we sin it is all our own, the devil has only to be charged with the art of insinuation. Just as he began with Eve, he goes on with us; in short, he reasons us out of our resolutions to do well, and wheedles us to an agreement to do ill, working us up to an opinion, that what evil we are about to do is no sin, or not so great a sin as we feared, and so draws us by art into the crime we had resolved against. This, indeed, the Scripture intimates when

it speaks of Satan's devices, the subtlety of the wicked one, his lying in wait, &c. But to charge the devil with forcing us to offend, is doing the devil a great deal of wrong; our doing evil is from the native propensity of our wills: *humanum est peccare.* I will not enter here into the dispute about original corruption in nature, which I know many good and learned men dispute; but that there is a secret aptness to offend, and a secret backwardness to what is good, which, if it is not born with us, we can give no account how we came by, this I think every man will grant; and that this is the devil that tempts us the Scripture plainly tells us, when it says, "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed."

There is a secret love of folly and vanity in the mind, and mankind are hurried down the stream of their own affections into crime; 't is agreeable to them to do this, and 't is a force upon nature not to do it.

> Vice is down hill, and when we do offend,
> 'T is nature all, we act as we intend.
> Virtue 's up hill, and all against the grain,
> Resolved reluctant, and pursued with pain.

But to return to the devil: his power not extending to creation, and being not able to force the world into an open rebellion against Heaven, as doubtless he would do if he could, he is left to the exercise of his skill; and, in a word, we may say of him, that he lives by his wits, that is to say, maintains his kingdom by subtlety and most exquisite cunning; and if my vision of his politics is not a new discovery, I am very much mistaken.

His innumerable legions, as I hinted above, like *aides-de-camp* to a general, are continually employed to carry his orders and execute his commissions in all parts of the world, and in every individual to oppose

the authority of God and the felicity of man to the utmost of his power.

The first and greatest part of his government is over those savage nations where he has obtained to set himself up as God, and to be worshipped instead of God; and I observed that though, having full possession of these people, even by whole nations at a time, that is the easiest part of his government; yet he is far from neglecting his interest there, but is exceeding vigilant to keep up his authority among those people. This he does by sending messengers into those parts to answer the pawawings or conjurings even of the most ignorant old wizard, raising storms and making noises, and shrieks in the air, flashes of infernal fire, and anything but to fright the people, that they may not forget him, and that they may have no other gods but him.

He has his peculiar agents for this work, which he makes detachments of, as his occasions require, some to one part of the world, some to another, as to the North America, even as far as to the frozen provinces of Greenland; to the north of Europe, to the Laplanders, Samoiedes, and Mongol Tartars; also to the Gog and Magog of Asia, and to the devil-makers of China and Japan; again to the southern parts of Asia, to the isles of the Indian and South Seas, and to the south part of America and Africa.

Through all these parts he has an uncontrolled power, and is either worshipped in person or by his representatives, the idols and monsters which the poor people bow down to, and Satan has very little trouble with them.

He employs, indeed, some millions of his missionaries into those countries, who labour *ad propagand. fid.*, and fail not to return and bring him an account of their success, and I doubt not but some of them were at my hand in my island when the savages

appeared there; for if the devil had not been in them, they would hardly have come straggling over the sea so far to devour one another.

In all these countries the brutality, the cruelty, and ravenous bloody dispositions of the people, is to me a certain testimony that the devil has full possession of them.

But to return to my observations in the exalted state of my fancy; I must tell you that though the devil carried on his schemes of government in those blinded parts of the world with great ease and all things went to his mind, I found he had more difficulty in the northern parts of the temperate zone; I mean, our climate and the rest of Christendom, and consequently he did not act here by whole squadrons and by generals, but was obliged to carry on his business among us by particular solicitations, to act by particular agents upon particular persons, attacking the personal conduct of men in a manner peculiar to himself. But so far was this difficulty from being any advantage to the world, or disadvantage to the devil, that it only obliged him to make use of the more engines; and as he had no want of numbers, I observed that his whole clan seemed busy on this side, the number of which consists of innumerable millions; so that, in short, there was not a devil wanting, no, not to manage every individual man, woman, and child in the world.

How, and in what manner, evil angels attend us, what their business, how far their power extends, and how far it is restrained, and by whom, were all made plain to me at one view in this state of *eclaircissement* that I stood in now, and I will describe it if I can in a few heads of fact; you may enlarge upon them as experience guides.

And first, the limitations of the devil's power are

necessary to be understood, and how directed. For example, you must know, that though the numbers of these evil spirits, which are thus diligently employed in mischief, are so infinitely great, yet the numbers of good angels or good spirits which are employed by a superior authority, and from a place infinitely distant and high above the devil's bounds, is not only equal, I say equal at least, in number, but infinitely superior in power, and it is this particular which makes it plain that all the devil does, or that his agents can do, is by continual subtlety, extreme vigilance and application, under infinite checks, rebukes, and callings off by the attendant spirits, who have power to correct and restrain him upon all occasions, just as a man does a dog or a thief when he is discovered.

On this account it is first plain, I say, that the devil can do nothing by force; he cannot kill, maim, hurt, or destroy; if he could, mankind would have but a very precarious state of life in the world; nay the devil cannot blast the fruits of the earth, cause dearth, droughts, famine, or scarcity; neither can he spread noxious fumes in the air to infect the world; if any of those things were in his power, he would soon unpeople God's creation, and put his Maker to the necessity of a new fiat, or of having no more human creatures to worship and honour Him.

You will ask me how I came to know all this? I say, ask me no questions till the elevation of your fancy carries you up to the outer edge of the atmosphere, as I tell you mine did. There you will see the prince of the air in his full state, managing his universal empire with the most exquisite art; but if ever you can come to a clear view of his person, do but look narrowly, and you will see a great clog at his foot, in token of his limited power; and though he himself is immense in bulk, and moves like a

fiery meteor in the air, yet you always see a hand with a thunderbolt impending just over his head; the arm coming out of a fiery cloud, which is a token of the sentence he is under, that at the end of his appointed time that cloud shall break, and that hand strike him with the thunder represented, down, down, for ever, into a place prepared for him.

But all this does not hinder him, who is prompted by infernal rage against the kingdom of God and the welfare of man, from pushing mankind, as above, upon all the methods of their own ruin and destruction, by alluring baits, cunning artifice, night whispers, infusing wicked desires, and fanning the flames of men's lusts, pride, avarice, ambition, revenge, and all the wicked excursions of corrupt nature.

It would take up a long tract by itself to form a system of the devil's politics, and to lay down a body of his philosophy. I observed, however, that some of his general rules are such as these: —

(1.) To infuse notions of liberty into the minds of men; that it is hard they should be born into the world with inclinations, and then be forbidden to gratify them; that such and such pleasure should be prepared in the nature of things, made suitable and proper to the senses and faculties, which on the other hand are prepared in mere constitution, and placed in his soul, and that then he should be forbidden, under the penalty of a curse, to taste them; that to place an appetite in the man, and a strong powerful gust to these delights, and then declare them fatal to him, would be laying a snare to mankind in his very constitution, and making his brightest faculties be the betrayers of his soul to misery, which would not consist with justice, much less with the goodness of a creator.

(2.) To persuade from hence, that the notions of

future punishments are fables and amusements, that it is not rational to think a just God would prepare infinite and eternal punishments for finite and trivial offences; that God does not take notice of the minute acts of life, and lay every slip to our charge, but that the merciful dispositions of God, who so bountifully directs the whole world to be assistant to the profit and delight of mankind, has certainly given him leave to enjoy it at will, and take the comfort of it without fear.

(3.) Of late, indeed, the devil has learned — for devils may improve as well as men in the arts of doing ill — at last, I say, he has learned to infuse a wild notion into the heads of some people, who are first fitted for it by having reasoned themselves in favor of their loose desires up to a pitch, that there is no such thing as a God or a future state at all.

Now, as at first the devil was not fool enough to attempt to put this jest upon man, his own antiquity and eternity being a contradiction to it; so I found among my new discoveries that the devil took this absurdity from man himself, and that it went among Satan's people for a new invention. I found also that there was a black party employed upon this new subtlety; these were a sort of devils, for Satan never wants instruments, who were called insinuators, and who were formerly employed to prompt men to crimes by dreams; and here I shall observe, that I learned a way how to make any man dream of what I please. For example: suppose one to be sound asleep, or, as we say, in a deep sleep or dead sleep, let another lay his mouth close to his ear and whisper anything to him so softly as not to awaken him, the sleeping man shall certainly dream of what was so whispered to him.

Let no man despise this hint: nothing is more

sure than that many of our dreams are the whispers of the devil, who, by his insinuators, whispers into our heads what wicked things he would have our thoughts entertain and work upon; and take this with you as you go, those insinuating devils can do this as well when we are awake as when we are asleep. And this will bring me to what I call impulses upon the mind, which are certainly whispers in the ear and no other, and come either from good angels attending us, or from the devil's insinuators, which are always at hand, and may be judged of according as the subject our thoughts are prompted to work upon is good or evil.

From whence but from these insinuators come our causeless passions, our involuntary wickedness, sinning in desire as effectually as by actual committing the crime we desire to commit?

Whence comes imagination to work upon wicked and vicious objects when the person is fast asleep, and when he had not been under the preparation of wicked discourse or wicked thoughts previous to those imaginations? Who forms ideas in the mind of man? who presents beautiful or terrible figures to his fancy, when his eyes are closed with sleep? who but these insinuating devils, who invisibly approach the man, sleeping or waking, and whisper all manner of lewd, abominable things into his mind.

Mr. Milton, whose imagination was carried up to a greater height than I am now, went farther into the abyss of Satan's empire a great way, especially when he formed Satan's palace of pandemonium; I say, he was exactly of this opinion when he represented the devil tempting our mother Eve in the shape of a toad lying just at her ear, when she lay fast asleep in her bower, where he whispered to her ear all the wicked things which she entertained notions of by night, and which prompted her the

next day to break the great command, which was the rule of her life; and, accordingly, he brings in Eve, telling Adam what an uneasy night's rest she had, and relating her dream to him.

This thought, however laid down in a kind of jest, is very seriously intended, and would, if well digested, direct us very clearly in our judgment of dreams, viz., not to suggest them to be always things of mere chance; but that sometimes they are to be heeded as useful warnings of evil or good by the agency of good spirits, as at other times they are the artful insinuations of the devil to inject wicked thoughts and abhorred abominable ideas into the mind; which we ought not only as much as possible to guard against, but even to repent of so far as the mind may have entertained and acted upon them.

From this general vision of the devil's management of his affairs, which I must own I have had with my eyes wide open, I find a great many useful observations to be made; and first, it can be no longer strange that, while the commerce of evil spirits is so free and the intercourse between this world and that is thus open, I say, it can be no longer strange that there are so many silent ways of spirits conversing; I mean, spirits of all kinds.

For, as I have observed already, there is a residence of good spirits, but they are placed infinitely higher, out of the reach and out of the sight of this lower orbit of Satan's kingdom; as those pass and repass invisible, I confess I have yet had no ideas of them but those which I have received from my first view of the infernal region. If I should have any superior elevations, and should be able to see the economy of Heaven in His disposition of things on earth, I shall be as careful to convey them to posterity as they come in.

However, the transactions of good spirits with man are certainly the same; for as God has, for a protection and safeguard to mankind, limited the devil from affrighting him by visible appearances in his native and hellish deformity, and the horrid shape he would necessarily bear; so, for man's felicity, even the glorious angels of heaven are very seldom allowed, at least not lately, to appear in the glorious forms they formerly took, or, indeed, in any form, or with a voice; the restraint of our souls in the case of flesh and blood we now wear not admitting it, and not being able to familiarise those things to us; man being by no means, in his incorporated state, qualified for an open and easy conversation with unembodied spirit.

Moreover, this would be breaking into the limits which the wisdom and goodness of God has put to our present state, I mean as to futurity, our ignorance in which is the greatest felicity of human life; and without which necessary blindness man could not support life, for nature is no way able to support a view into futurity; I mean, not into that part of futurity which concerns us in our state of life in this world.

I have often been myself among the number of those fools that would be their own fortune-tellers; but when I look thus beyond the atmosphere, and see a little speculatively into invisibles, I could easily perceive that it is our happiness that we are short-sighted creatures, and can see but a very little before us. For example, were we to have the eyes of our souls opened through the eyes of our bodies, we should see this very immediate region of air which we breathe in thronged with spirits, to us, blessed be God, now invisible, and which would otherwise be most frightful; we should see into the secret transactions of those messengers who are employed when the pass-

ing soul takes its leave of the reluctant body, and perhaps see things nature would shrink back from with the utmost terror and amazement. In a word, the curtain of Providence for the disposition of things here, and the curtain of judgment for the determination of the state of souls hereafter, would be alike drawn back ; and what heart could support here its future state in life, much less that of its future state after life, even good or bad?

It is, then, our felicity that the converse of spirits and the visions of futurity are silent, emblematic, and done by hints, dreams, and impulses, and not by clear vision and open discovery. They that desire a fuller and plainer sight of these things ask they know not what ; and it was a good answer of a gipsy, when a lady of my acquaintance asked her to tell her fortune, "Do not ask me, lady," said the gipsy, "to tell you what you dare not hear." The woman was a little honester than her profession intimated, and freely confessed it was all a cheat, and that they knew nothing of fortunes, but had a course or round of doubtful expressions, to amuse ignorant people and get a little money.

Even the devil's oracles — for such, no doubt, they were at Delphos and at other places, though the devil seemed at that time to have some liberties granted him which it is evident have since been denied him — were allowed to be given only in doubtful expressions, double entendres, echoes of words, and such like. For example: a man going to sea, and inquiring of the oracle thus —

"Have I just cause the seas and storms to fear?"
Echo — "Fear."

Another.

"Shall we the Parthian boatmen fight, or fly?"
Echo — "Fly."

Such dark replies, and other words doubtful and enigmatic, were frequently given and taken for answers, by which the deluded world were kept in doubt of that futurity they hunted after. But Satan, even then, was not permitted to speak plain, or mankind to see what awaited them behind the dark veil of futurity; nor was it proper, on any account whatsoever, that it should be otherwise.

But before I come to this let me put some limits to the elevations and visions I have mentioned before; for as I am far from enthusiastic in my notions of things, so I would not lead any one to fancy themselves farther enlightened than is meet, or to see things invisible, as St. Paul heard things unutterable.

And, therefore, let me add here, that the highest raptures, trances, and elevations of the soul are bounded by the eternal decree of Heaven, and let men pretend to what visions they please, it is all romance; all beyond what I have talked of above is fabulous and absurd, and it will for ever be true, as the Scripture says, not only those things are hid from the eye, but even from the conception.

Upon this occasion, I must own that I think it is criminal to attempt to form ideas either of hell or of heaven in the mind, other than as the Scripture has described them, by the state rather than the place. We are told, in plain words, it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive either of what is prepared for the future state of the happy or miserable; 't is enough for us to entertain the general notion — the favour of God is heaven, and the loss of it the most dreadful of all, hell.

> A heaven of joy must in His presence dwell,
> And in His absence every place is hell.

My meaning is this; all visions, or propounded visions, either of heaven or hell, are mere delusions

of the mind, and generally are fictions of a waking bewildered head ; and you may see the folly of them in the meanest of the descriptions, which generally end in showing some glorious place, fine walks, noble illustrious palaces, gardens of gold, and people of shining forms and the like. Alas ! these are all so short that they are unworthy the thoughts of a mind elevated two degrees above darkness and dirt. All these things amount to no more than Mahomet's Alcoran and the glorious state of things represented by him to his believers. In short, all this makes only a heaven of sense, but comes so infinitely short of what alone must or can be a heaven to an exalted glorified spirit, that I as much want words to express how contemptible the best of these descriptions are as to a true description of heaven as I do to express a true idea or description of heaven myself.

And how should this be done ? We can form no idea of anything that we know not and have not seen but in the form of something that we have seen. How, then, can we form an idea of God or heaven in any form but of something which we have seen or known ? By what image in the mind can we judge of spirits ? By what idea conceive of eternal glory ? Let us cease to imagine concerning it ; 't is impossible to attain, it is criminal to attempt it.

Let me, therefore, hint here, that supposing myself, as before, in the orbit of the sun, take it in its immense distance as our astronomers conceive of it, or on the edge only of the atmosphere with a clear view of the whole solar system, the region of Satan's empire all in view, and the world of spirits laid open to me :

Yet let me give you this for a check to your imagination, that even here the space between finite

and infinite is as impenetrable as on earth, and will for ever be so till our spirits, being uncased, shall take their flight to the centre of glory, where everything shall be seen as it is; and therefore you must not be surprised if I am come down again from the verge of the world of spirits the same short-sighted wretch as to futurity and things belonging to heaven and hell as I went up; for elevations of this kind are meant only to give us a clearer view of what we are, not of what we shall be, and 't is an advantage worth travelling for too. All this I thought necessary to prevent the whimsical building of erroneous structures on my foundation, and fancying themselves carried farther than they are able to go.

I come, therefore, back to talk of things familiar, and particularly to mention in the next place some of those other ways by which we have notice given of this converse of spirits which I have been speaking of; for the whispers and insinuators I have mentioned go sometimes farther than ordinary.

One of those other methods is, when, by strong impulses of the mind, as we call them, we are directed to do or not to do this or that particular thing that we have before us to do, or are under a consultation about. I am a witness to many of these things, as well in my own life as in my observation of others.

I know a man, who being at some distance from London, not above six or seven miles, a friend that came to visit and dine with him urged him to go to London. "What for?" says his friend; "is there any business wants me?" — "Nay, nothing," says the other, "but for your company; I do not know of anything wants you;" and so gave over importuning him. But as his friend had given it over a strong impulse of mind seized him and followed him, like a voice, with this — Go to London, go to London. He put it by several times, but it went on still — Go

to London, go to London, and nothing else could come upon his thoughts but Go to London. He came back to his friend, "Hark ye," says he, "tell me sincerely, is all well at London? Am I wanted there? Did you ask me to go to London with you on any particular account?" — "Not I," says his friend, "in the least; I saw all your family, and all is very well there; nor did they say they had any particular occasion for you to return; I only ask it, as I told you, for the sake of your company." So he put off going again, but could have no quiet, for it still followed him, and no doubt a good spirit communicated it — Go to London; and at length he resolved he would go, and did so; and when he came there he found a letter, and messengers had been at his house to seek him and to tell him of a particular business, which was, first and last, worth above a thousand pounds to him, and which, if he had not been found that very night, would have been in danger of being lost.

I seriously advise all sober-thinking persons not to disregard those powerful impulses of the mind in things otherwise indifferent or doubtful, but believe them to be whispers from some kind spirit, which sees something that we cannot see, and knows something that we cannot know.

Besides, unless infinite Power should take off the silence that is imposed upon the inhabitants of the invisible world, and allow them to speak audibly, nothing can be a plainer voice; they are words spoken to the mind, though not to the ear, and they are a certain intelligence of things unseen, because they are given by persons unseen, and the event confirms it beyond all dispute.

I know a man who made it his rule always to obey these silent hints, and he has often declared to me that when he obeyed them he never miscarried; and

if he neglected them, or went on contrary to them, he never succeeded; and gave me a particular case of his own, among a great many others, wherein he was thus directed. He had a particular case befallen him, wherein he was under the displeasure of the Government, and was prosecuted for a misdemeanour, and brought to a trial in the King's Bench Court, where a verdict was brought against him, and he was cast; and times running very hard at that time against the party he was of, he was afraid to stand the hazard of a sentence, and absconded, taking care to make due provision for his bail, and to pay them whatever they might suffer. In this circumstance he was in very great distress, and no way presented unto him but to fly out of the kingdom, which, being to leave his family, children, and employment, was very bitter to him, and he knew not what to do; all his friends advising him not to put himself into the hands of the law, which, though the offence was not capital, yet, in his circumstances, seemed to threaten his utter ruin. In this extremity he felt one morning — just as he awaked, and the thoughts of his misfortune began to return upon him — I say, he felt a strong impulse darting into his mind thus, Write a letter to them. It spoke so distinctly to him, and as it were forcibly, that, as he has often said since, he can scarce persuade himself not to believe but that he heard it; but he grants that he really did not hear it too.

However, it repeated the words daily and hourly to him, till at length, walking about in his chamber, where he was hidden, very pensive and sad, it jogged him again, and he answered aloud to it, as if it had been a voice, Who shall I write to? It returned immediately, Write to the judge. This pursued him again for several days, till at length he took his pen, ink, and paper, and sat down to write, but knew not

one word of what he should say ; but, *dabitur in hac hora*, he wanted not words. It was immediately impressed on his mind, and the words flowed upon his pen in a manner that even charmed himself, and filled him with expectations of success.

The letter was so strenuous in argument, so pathetic in its eloquence, and so moving and persuasive, that as soon as the judge read it he sent him word he should be easy, for he would endeavour to make that matter light to him ; and, in a word, never left till he obtained to stop prosecution, and restore him to his liberty and to his family.

These hints, I say, are of a nature too significant to be neglected ; whence they come is the next inquiry. I answer, they are the whispers of some subsisting spirit communicated to the soul without the help of the organ, without the assistance of a particular sound, and without any other communication ; but, take it as you go, not without the merciful disposition of that Power that governs that world, as well as this that we are sensible of. How near those spirits are to us, who thus foresee what concerns us, and how they convey these hints into our minds as well waking as sleeping, or how they are directed, that I could not discover, nor can yet resolve, no, not in the highest of my imaginary elevation, any more than in what manner they are limited and restrained.

I have been asked by some, to whom I have talked freely of my frequent applications to these things, if I knew anything by those observations of the manner of the disposition of the human soul after its departure out of the body, I mean, as to its middle state, and whether, as some, it has a wandering existence in the upper part of the waste or abyss near to, but not in, a present state of felicity? Whether it is still confined within the atmosphere

of the earth, according to others, as in a *limbus*, or purgatory; or in the circle of the sun, as others say? Whether I knew or perceived anything of our Saviour's being ascended into the body of the sun only, and not into the highest heaven, receiving His redeemed souls to Himself, and into an incorporation with His glory there, till the restitution of all things? Whether I perceived anything of Satan being possessed of the reprobate souls as they departed; and of his substitutes, as executioners, being empowered and employed to torment them according to the received notions of the wise contemplators of such things?

I answered, as I do now, that not only nothing of all this appears, but, on the contrary, such serious contemplations as mine give a great and abundant reason to be satisfied that there is nothing in it all but mere dream and enthusiastic conjecture. I own that the agents I mentioned make use of all those things to terrify and affright poor ignorant people out of their senses, and to drive them often into desperation, and after to restore them by a cure that is worse than the distemper, namely, by a hardness and coldness of temper, rejecting entirely all the notions of eternity and futurity, and so fitting them to go out of the world as they lived in it, viz., without troubling themselves with what is to come after it.

But I return to the article of impulses of the mind, for I lay a greater weight upon these than upon any of the other discoveries of the invisible world, because they have something in them relating to what we are about, something directing, something to guide us in avoiding the evils that attend us, and to accepting, or rather embracing, opportunities of doing ourselves good when they present, which many times, for want of the knowledge of our way, we irrecoverably let slip.

Voices, apparitions, noises, and all the other affrighting things which unavoidably follow the neighbourhood of spirits in the air we breathe in, seem to have much less signification, as to us, than these seasonable kind whispers to our souls, which, it is plain, are directed for the advantage of life.

It seems hard that mankind should be so open to the secret insinuators, the whispering devils I have been speaking of, who are night and day, sleeping and waking, working upon his senses by the arts and subtleties of hell, to fill his imagination with a thousand devilish contrivances to gratify his vanity and lust; and that our thoughts should be always ready to receive the impressions they make, pressed to follow the infernal counsel, be awake to listen to all his directions, but should be deaf to the instructions of any kind spirits that would influence us for our advantage, and insensible to those impressions which are made upon us for our immediate good by an agent good in itself, and acting from a principle, whatever it be, of good to us.

We have a foolish saying, though taken from something that is more significant than we imagine, when any danger has surprised us — Well, my mind misgave me when I was going about it; well, I knew some mischief would come of it. Did you so? And why then did you do it? Why did you go on? Why, when your mind misgave you, did you not obey the friendly caution? Whence do you think your mind received the speaking, though silent impression? Why did you not listen to it as to a voice? For such a one it was, no doubt; and let all those unthinking people who go on in anything they are upon, contrary to those secret, silent impressions upon their minds, I say, let them know and observe it, they will very seldom fail of meeting some mischief in the way. They will very seldom

fail of miscarrying in the way. I say very seldom, because I would not take upon me to prescribe things positively, which the reader will take me up short in, and say, how do I know it? But I will take the liberty to say, I durst be positive in it, relating to myself, and I durst be positive from the nature and reason of the thing.

As to my own experience, I waive saying much of it, but that in general I never slighted these impulses but to my great misfortune; I never listened to and obeyed them, but to my great advantage; but I choose to argue from the reason of them, rather than from my own experience.

As they are evident warnings of what is to come, and are testified daily and hourly by the things coming to pass afterwards, so they are undeniable testimonies that they proceed from some being, intelligent of those things that are at hand, while they are yet to come. If, then, I am satisfied that it is a notice given from a something, be it what it will, which is fully informed of what is attending me, though concealed from me, why should I slight the hint given me from anything that knows what I know not, and especially, for example, for avoiding evils to come?

I know a person, who had so strong an impression upon her mind that the house she was in would be burnt that very night, that she could not go to sleep; the impulse she had upon her mind pressed her not to go to bed, which, however, she resisted and went to bed, but was so terrified with the thought, which, as she called it, run in her mind, that the house would be burnt, that she could not go to sleep.

She had made so much discovery of her apprehensions in the family, that they were all in a fright, and applied themselves to search from the top of

the house to the bottom, and to see every fire and every candle safe out, so that, as they all said, it was impossible anything could happen in the house, and they sent to the neighbours on both sides to do the like. Thus far they did well, but had she obeyed the hint, which pressed upon her strangely not to go to bed, she had done much better, for the fire was actually kindled at that very time, though not broken out.

In about an hour after the whole family was in bed, the house just over the way, directly opposite, was all in a flame, and the wind, which was very high, blowing the flame upon the house this gentlewoman lived in, so filled it with smoke and fire in a few moments, the street being narrow, that they had not air to breathe, or time to do anything but jump out of their beds and save their lives. Had she obeyed the hint given, and not gone to bed, she might have saved several things of value which she lost; but as she neglected that, and would go to bed, the moments she had spared to her were but just sufficient to get out of bed, get some clothes on, and get downstairs, for the house was on fire in half a quarter of an hour.

It might be asked here, why could not the same kind spirit have intimated by the same whispers where the danger lay, and from what quarter it was to be expected; in what manner the fire would attack them, and that it would come from the other side of the street, the wind blowing it directly upon them?

To this I answer, that it is our business the more vigilantly to observe and listen to the hints which are given, seeing the intimations are not so particular as we might wish, without inquiring into the reasons why they are given no plainer. We have a great deal of reason to believe the kind spirit that

gives these intimations and whispers thus to us, gives us all the light it is permitted to give, and whispers as much, either as it knows, or as it is allowed to communicate; otherwise, why does it give any intimations at all? But, on the other hand, it may be alleged that enough is intimated to suffice for our safety, if we will obey the intimation; and it would be a much more reasonable question to ask why we slight and disobey the impression that we acknowledge to have received, rather than why the intimation was no plainer.

A person of my acquaintance being to go to New England by sea, two ships presented, and the masters earnestly solicited to take him as a passenger; he asked my advice, professing that as well the ships as the captains were perfectly indifferent to him, both the men being equally agreeable to him, and the vessels equally good. I had my eye upon this notion of impulses, and pressed upon him to observe strictly if he had not some secret motion of his mind to one ship rather than another, and he said he had not.

After some time he accidentally met one of the captains, and falling into terms with him, agreed for his passage, and accordingly prepared to go on board; but from the very time that he made the agreement, nay, even while he was making the bargain, he had a strong impression on his mind that he should not go in that ship.

It was some days after this that he told me of these impressions, which increased on him every day; upon which I pressed him earnestly not to go, but to take passage with the other. After he had resolved upon this, he came to me, and told me, that he had with some difficulty and some loss put off the first ship, but now he had the same, or rather stronger aversion to going in the second ship, and had a

strong impression on his mind that if he went in the second ship he should be drowned. I bid him consider it a little, and tell me if he had any further intimations of it; and he continued to tell me that he had no rest about his going in either of those ships, and yet his affairs lay so that he was under a necessity of going, and there was no other ship put up upon the Exchange for going.

I pressed him, however, not to venture by any means; I convinced him that those impulses of his mind were the whispers of some kind spirit, that saw things farther than he could, and were certainly given him as cautions to save him from some mischief which he might not foresee; that it could be no evil spirit, because the keeping him back could be no injury to him of such a nature as would gratify the devil in any part of his usual desires; it must therefore be something for his good, and he ought to be very cautious how he slighted the silent admonition. In a word, I prepossessed him so much in aid of the secret impulses of his own mind, that he resolved not to go that year, and he saw clearly afterwards that the secret intimation was from a good hand, for both the ships miscarried; the first being taken by the Turks, and the latter cast away and all the men lost, the ship foundering at sea, as was supposed, for she was never heard of.

I could fill this tract with accounts of this nature, but the reason of the case is stronger than the example; for as it is an intimation of something future, and that is to come to pass, it is certain there is a state in which what is future and must come to pass is known, and why should we not believe the news, if it comes from the place where the certainty of it is known?

Some give all this to a prescience peculiar to the soul itself, and of kin to that we call the second

After some time he accidently met one of the captains, and falling into terms with him, agreed for his passage

strong [illegible] on his mind that if he went in the [illegible] should be drowned. I bid him consider [illegible], and tell me if he had any further [illegible] of it; and he continued to tell me that [illegible] his going in either of these [illegible] his affairs lay so that he was under a [illegible] of going, and there was no other ship put [illegible] the Exchange for going.

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[illegible] this [illegible] with accounts of this nature, [illegible] of the [illegible] is stronger than the ex[illegible] is an intimation of something future, [illegible] it is certain there is [illegible] what [illegible] and must cease to [illegible] believe the [illegible] the certainty [illegible]

[illegible] to a [illegible] peculiar to the soul [illegible] to [illegible] the second

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sight; but I see no ground for this but mere presumption. Others call it an afflatus, which they think is a distemper of the brain. Others call it a sympathetic power in the soul, foreboding its own disasters. But all this is short of the thing, for here is not a foreboding only, which indeed is often felt, but is expressed another way; but here is a direct intelligence, a plain intimation of the evil, and warning to avoid it: this must be more than an afflatus, more than a sympathy; this must be from a certain knowledge of a thing that exists not, by a something that does exist; and must be communicated by a converse of spirits unembodied, with the spirit embodied, for its good; unless you will call it Divine revelation, which I see no ground for.

All these reasonings make it abundantly our concern to regard these things, as what we are greatly concerned in; however, that is not the chief use I make of them here, but (1.) they abundantly explain the nature of the world of spirits, and the certainty of an existence after death; (2.) they confirm that the disposition of Providence concerning man, and the event of things, are not so much hidden from the inhabitants of that world as they are from us; as also (3.) that spirits unembodied see with a sight differing from us, and are capable of knowing what attends us, when we know nothing of it ourselves.

This offered many useful reflections to my mind, which, however, 't is impossible for me to communicate with the same vivacity, or to express with the same life, that the impression they make on my own thoughts came with.

The knowledge of there being a world of spirits, may be many ways useful to us, and especially that of their seeing into futurity, so as to be able to communicate to us, by what means soever they do it, what we shall or shall not do, or what shall or shall

not befall us; to communicate dangers before us so as they may be avoided, and mischiefs awaiting us, so as they may be prevented, and even death itself, so as we may prepare for it; for we may certainly, if we would attend to these things, increase our acquaintance with them, and that very much to our advantage.

I would be far from prompting the crazy imaginations of hypochondriac distempered heads, which run men out to so many extravagancies, and which, in fixing their thoughts upon the real world of spirits, make this an imaginary world of spirits to them; who think they are talked to from the invisible world by the howling of every dog, or the screeching of every owl. I believe it was much of this vapourish dreaming fancy by which the augurs of the Romans determined events from the flying of birds, and the entrails of beasts.

It will be hard for me to be prevailed on to suppose that even those intelligent spirits which I speak of, who are able by such easy ways, as the impulses of our minds, dreams, and the like, to convey the knowledge of things to us, can be put to the necessity, or find reason to make use of the agency of dogs and birds, to convey their notices by; this would be to suppose them to be much more confined in their converse with us, than we evidently find they are; and, on the other hand, would suppose the inanimate world to have more knowledge of the invisible than we have, whereas, on the other hand, we know they have nothing at all to do with it.

There is only this to be said for it, namely, that those inanimate creatures do it involuntarily, and, as it were, under the power of a possession.

I will not affirm but that the invisible inhabitants I have been speaking of may have power to act upon

the brute creatures, so as to employ them, or make use of their agency, in the warnings and notices which they give to us of things to come; but that the brutes have otherwise any farther sight of things than we have, I can see nothing at all of that. It is true Balaam's ass saw the angel with the flaming sword standing in the road when the prophet did not, but the reason is plainly expressed; the angel was really there, and actually presenting terror to them with a flaming sword in his hand, only the prophet's eyes were miraculously withheld that he could not see him.

I shall unriddle this mystery of the agency of beasts and birds as far as reason dictates; and it seems to be easy upon the scheme of the nearness of the spirits I am speaking of to us, and their concern to convey intelligence to us. They may, I say, have power to terrify the brutes by horrible apparitions to them, so as to force those howlings and screechings we have been told of, and to do this in such places, and at such times, as shall suit with the circumstances of the family or person concerned, and so far their said extraordinary howlings and screechings may be significant; but that the brutes can either, by sense or by extraordinary sight, have any foreknowledge of things in futurity relating to us, or to themselves, this has no foundation in reason or philosophy, any more than it has in religion. Matter may act upon material objects, and so the understanding or sense of a brute may act upon visible objects, but matter cannot act upon immaterial things, and so the eye of a beast cannot see a spirit, or the mind of a brute act upon futurity, eternity, and the sublime things of a state to come.

What use, then, the spirits we speak of, inhabiting the invisible world, can make of the inanimate world to direct them, as missionaries to us, I do not see,

neither did I in all my altitudes perceive they employed any such agents.

It is from the misunderstanding of these things that we place abundance of incidents, merely fortuitous, to the devil's account, which he knows nothing of. Many a storm blows that is none of his raising; many a midnight noise happens that is none of his making. If Satan or his instruments had one tenth part of the power, either of the air, or in the air, or over the elements, that we give them in our imaginations, we should have our houses burnt every night, hurricanes raised in the air, floods made in the country, and, in a word, the world would not be habitable; but you remember I told you, as powerful as he is, he is chained, he has a great clog at his foot, and he can do nothing by violence, or without permission.

I might hint here at abundance of idle, ridiculous devils, that we are daily told of, that come and only make game among us, put out our candles, throw chairs and stools about the house, break glasses, make a smoke, a stink of brimstone, &c., whereas, after all, the devil has no more sulphur about him than other folks, and I can answer for it that Satan is not disposed for mirth; all the frolics and gambols we ascribe to him, I dare say, are antics of our own brain. I heard of a house in Essex which they told me was haunted, and that every night the devil or a spirit, call it which you will, came into such a room, and made a most terrible knocking, as if it had a hammer or a mallet, and this for two or three hours together. At length, upon looking about in an empty closet in that room, there was found an old mallet, and this was presently concluded to be the mallet which the devil made such a noise with, so it was taken away; but the next night they said the devil made such a racket for want of the mallet,

that they were much more disturbed than before, so they were obliged to leave the mallet there again, and every night the devil would come and knock in the window, for two or three hours together, with that mallet. I have seen the room and the mallet, in neither of which was anything extraordinary, but never heard the noise, though I sat up to wait for it, nor after causing the mallet to be taken away was there any noise; belike the mannerly spirit would not disturb us who were strangers.

This passed for a most eminent piece of walking or haunting, and all the difficulty was to inquire to what purpose all this disturbance was made, seeing there was no end answered in it, and I always thought the devil was too full of business to spend his time to no manner of purpose.

At last all the cheat was discovered, viz., that a monkey, kept in a house three or four houses from it, had found the way into that room, and came every night almost about midnight, and diverted himself with the frolic, and then went home again.

If these things were not frequently detected, it would be a great scandal upon the devil that he had nothing to employ himself in more significant than rapping all night with a hammer to fright and disturb the neighbours, making noises, putting out candles, and the like. When we come into the invisible state, of which we now know so little, we shall be easily convinced that the devil is otherwise employed, and has business of much more importance upon his hands.

It would be very insignificant to have us so frequently warned against Satan's devices, to have us be cautioned to be sober and vigilant, knowing that our adversary, the devil, goes about like a roaring lion, seeking, &c. All these things import that he is diligent in attacking us, watching all advantages,

hunting us down, circumventing, waiting, and constantly plying us with snares that he may trepan and devour us. This admits not any of those simple, ludicrous, and senseless digressions which we set him to work upon in our imaginations.

Perhaps it may be expected I should enter here upon the subject of apparitions, and discourse with equal certainty of that undecided question concerning the reality of apparitions, and whether departed souls can revisit the place of their former existence, take up shapes, bodies, and visible and apparent beings, assume voices, and concern themselves with the affairs of life, of families, persons, and even of estates, and the like, as many have affirmed they have been witnesses to.

I must be allowed to leave this where I find it. There are some difficulties which I am not yet got over in it, nor have I been elevated high enough to determine that point, and shall not venture to decide it without more certainty than I am yet arrived to.

I would warn all people not to suffer their imagination to form shapes and appearances where there are none; and I may take upon me to say that the devil himself does not appear half so often as some people think they see him: fancy governs many people, and a sick brain forms strange things to itself; but it does not follow from thence that nothing can appear because nothing does at that time.

However, as my design is to instruct, not amuse, so, I say, I forbear to enter upon a subject which I must leave as doubtful as I find it, and consequently talk of to no purpose.

I have heard of a man that would allow the reality of apparitions, but would have it be nothing but the devil; that the souls of men departed or good spirits never appeared. It happened that to

this very man something appeared, as he said, and insisted upon it to the last. He said he saw the shape of an ancient man pass by him in the dusk of the evening, who, holding up his hand as it were in a threatening posture, said aloud, "O wicked creature! repent, repent." He was exceedingly terrified, and consulted several people about it, who all advised him seriously to take the advice, for his life made it well known, it seems, that he stood in need of it; but being seriously debating about it, one of his friends asked what he thought of the apparition, and whether it was any of the devil's business to bid him repent. This puzzled his thoughts, and, in a word, he grew a very sober man; but, after all, it was a real man, and no apparition, that spoke to him, though his frighted fancy made him affirm that he vanished out of his sight, which he did not; and the person who did it, being a grave and pious gentleman, met him by mere accident, without any design, and spoke as he did, from the knowledge he had of his being indeed a most wretched wicked fellow. By the way, the gentleman had the opportunity to hear the use that was made of it, and to hear himself mistaken for an apparition of the devil, but he was so prudent as not to discover it to the man, lest the reformation, which was the consequence of the fright, should wear off, when he should know that there was nothing in the thing but what was common.

If we would always make the like good use of Satan's real appearances, I do not know but it would go a great way to banish him from the visible world; for I am well assured he would very seldom visit us, if he thought his coming would do us any good; at least, he would never come but when he was sent, he would never come willingly; for he is so absolutely at the Divine disposal, that if Heaven

commands he must go, though it were to do the good he abhors. Not that I believe Heaven ever thinks fit to employ him in doing good; if ever he is let loose, 't is to act in judgment as an instrument of vengeance, and some are of opinion he is often employed as a destroying angel, though I do not grant that; I can hardly think the justice of God would gratify Satan's gust of doing evil so far as to suffer him to be even so much as an executioner; but that is by the way.

I have another turn to give this part of my observations, which though, perhaps, some may not think so much to the purpose as entering into a critical inquiry after the devil's particular mission in these cases, yet I think otherwise.

I have observed that some desperate people make a very ill use of the general notion, that there are no apparitions, nor spirits at all; and really, the use they make of it is worse than the extreme of those who, as I said, make visions and devils of everything they see or hear. For these men persuade themselves there are no spirits at all, either in the visible or invisible world, and, carrying it on farther, they next annihilate the devil, and believe nothing about him, either of one kind or another.

This would not be of so much bad consequence if it was not always followed by a worse, namely, that when they have prevailed with themselves to believe there is no devil, the next thing is, and they soon come to it, that there is no God, and so atheism takes its rise in the same sink, with a carelessness about futurity.

I have no mind to enter upon an argument to prove the being of our Maker, and to illustrate His power by words, who has so many undeniable testimonies in the breasts of every rational being to prove His existence. But I have a mind to conclude this

work with a short history of some atheists, which I met with many years ago, and whether the facts are testified or not, may be equally useful in the application, if you do not think them a little too religious for you.

Some years ago there was a young gentleman, a scholar at the university, eminent for learning and virtue, of prompt parts and great proficiency, insomuch that he was taken great notice of by the masters and fellows, and every one promised fair in their thoughts for him, that he would be a great man. It happened, whether from his earnest desire of more knowledge, or the opinion of his own great capacity, I know not which, that this gentleman, falling upon the study of divinity, grew so opinionative, so very positive and dogmatic in his notions in religious things, that by degrees it came to this height, that his tutor saw plainly that he had little more than notions in all his religious pretences to knowledge, and concluded he would either grow enthusiastic or obstinately profane and atheistic.

He had three chums, or companions, in his studies, and they all fell into the same error, as well by the consequence of a great deal of wit and little grace, as by the example and leading of this other young gentleman, who was, indeed, their oracle almost in everything.

As his tutor, who was a very good man, feared for him, so it came to pass with him and all the rest; for they ran up their superficial notions in divinity to such a height that, instead of reasoning themselves into good principles of religion, they really reasoned themselves out of all religion whatsoever, running on to expunge every right idea from their minds; pretending those things really were not, of which they could not define both how and what they were, they proceeded to deny the existence of their

Maker, the certainty of a future state, a resurrection, a judgment, a heaven, or a hell.

They were not contented to satisfy themselves with these impious foundations, but they set up to dispute in private societies against all revealed religion, thereby bringing on themselves the curse denounced in Scripture against those that do evil and teach men so to do; in a little time they grew so public that more company came in, and, which was worse, many joined with them in principle, or, as I should rather have said, in casting off all principles, and they began to be famous in the place, though to the offence of all good men, and were called "The Atheistical Club."

They soon began to see sober, religious people shun them, and in some time, upon information given, they were obliged, by authority, to separate for fear of punishment, so that they could not hold their public disputations as they began to do, yet they abated nothing of their wicked custom; and this dreadful creature, who set up at the head of the rest, began to be so open in his blasphemies that he was at length obliged to fly from the university.

However, he went a great while before it came to that; and though he had been often admonished, yet, instead of reclaiming, he grew the more impious, making the most sacred things his jest and the subject of his ridicule. He gave out that he could frame a new gospel, and a much better system of religion than that which they called Christian; and that if he would trouble himself to go about it, he would not fail to draw in as great a part of the world to run after him as had been after any other. I care not to repeat any of his blasphemous words; it is not to be supposed there can be any blasphemous abominable thing that this set of wicked wretched young men did not run into, neither any

wickedness of that kind within their reach which they did not commit.

It would be too long to enter into the particular history of these men, and how it pleased God to dispose of them; they might be in number, before they separated, about twenty-two in all; I shall tell you of some of them, however, who did not run such lengths as the rest. There was a young man who frequented their society, though, as he afterwards said, he was rather persuaded to be among them than to be one of them; he had, however, too much yielded to their delusions; and though they made him very much their jest, because they found he still retained some little sense of a God and of a future state in his mind, yet he had yielded dreadfully to them, and began to do so more and more every day.

It happened one day this young man was going to their hellish society, and not minding the weather, the clouds gathered over his head, and he was stopped by a sudden shower of rain in the street. It rained so very hard that it obliged him to stand up in the gateway of an inn for some time; while he was standing here a great flash of lightning more than ordinarily surprised him; it seems the fire came so directly in his face that he felt the very warmth of it, and was exceedingly startled; in the same moment almost, as is natural in the case, followed such a clap of thunder that perfectly astonished him. The rain continuing kept him in the gateway, as I said, for a good while, till he had time for such reflections as these: "Where am I going? What am I going about? Who is it has stopped me thus? Why are these thunders, these rains, and this lightning thus terrible? and whence are they?" And with the rest came in this thought, warm and swift as the lightning which had terrified

him before, "What if there should be a God! what will become of me then?" Terrified with these things he starts out of the gateway into the street, notwithstanding the wet, and runs back through the rain, saying to himself as he went, "I will go among them no more!" When he came home to his chambers he fell into dreadful agonies of mind, and at length broke out thus: "What have I been doing! have I been denying the Power that made me? despising that God whose fire flashed just now in my face; and which, had not that mercy I have abused interposed, might have burnt me to death? What kind of creature am I?" While he was thus giving vent to his reflections a near relation of his — a pious, good man, who had often used to speak very plainly to him of the horrid sin he was guilty of — happened to come to visit him.

The young man had thrown himself upon his bed, and had, with the deepest sense of his madness and most serious reproaches of himself for his horrid life, been expressing himself to his friend, and he had been comforting him in the best manner he could, when, after a while, he desired his friend to retire that he might be a little alone and might give vent to his thoughts with the more freedom; and his friend taking a book in his hand stayed in the outer room.

In this interval came another scholar to the door, who was one of the wicked company I mentioned just now. He came not to visit this first gentleman, but to call him to go with him to the usual meeting of their dreadful society; and knocking at his chamber door, this gentleman who was left in the chamber stepped to the door, and, looking through a little grate, not only knew the person, but knew him to be one of the wicked company I have been speaking of. Now, as he was very loath

his friend should have such an interruption to the good disposition he was then in, so, above all, he was loath he should be persuaded to go any more among that miserable gang; wherefore he opened the door a little way, so as he was not very distinctly seen, and spoke aloud in the person of his friend thus: "O sir, beseech them all to repent; for, depend upon it, there is a God; tell them I say so;" and with that he shut the door upon him violently, giving him no time to reply, and, going back into his friend's room, took no notice of anybody having been at the door at all.

The person who knocked at the door you may suppose was one of the leaders of the company, a young scholar of good parts and sense, but debauched by that horrid crew, and one that had made himself eminent for his declared opposition to all the common notions of religion; a complete atheist, and publicly so, without God or the desire of God in the world. However, as he afterwards confessed, the repulse he met with at the door, and which he thought came from his friend, gave him a strange shock at first and filled him with horror. He went down the college stairs in the greatest confusion imaginable, and went musing along a good way, not knowing where he was or whither he went, and in that embarrassment of thought went a whole street out of the way. The words had made an unusual impression upon his mind, but he had his other surprises too; for he thought his friend, for he believed firmly that it was he that had spoken to him, had treated him very rudely.

Sometimes he resented it, and reflected upon it as an affront, and once or twice was upon the point of going back again to him to know the reason of his using him so, and to demand satis-

faction; but still the words, "There is a God," dwelt upon his mind. "And what if it should be so?" says he, "what then?" Upon this question to himself, the answer immediately occurred to his mind. "What then? Why, then, I am undone! For, have not I declared war against the very notion, defied all the pretenders to it as mere enthusiasts and men of whimsey?" However, after these thoughts his mind cooled a little again, and it offered to him, no doubt injected by an evil spirit, that he should not trouble himself with inquiring into it one way or another, but be easy.

This pacified him for a little while, and he shook off the surprise he was in; the hardened temper seemed to return, and he kept on his way towards the hellish society that he was going to before. But still the words returned upon him, "There is a God," and began to bring some terror with it upon his mind; and the last words of his friend came into his mind often, "tell them I say so." This filled him with a curiosity which he could not withstand, viz., of going back to his friend and inquiring of him what discoveries he had made of this kind? How he came to have changed his mind so suddenly? And, especially, how he was arrived to a certainty of the thing?

I told you that there had been a great shower of rain, which had stopped the first young gentleman in his way out; it seems the day was still showery, and a little rain happening to fall again as this gentleman went by a bookseller's shop, he stops at the door to stand up a little out of the wet.

There happened to be sitting in the shop reading a book a gentleman of his acquaintance, though far differing from him in his principles, being a very sober, studious, religious young man, a student in

divinity of the same college, who, looking up, called him in, and after a few common salutes he whispers in his ear.

Student. I was looking in an old book here just now, and began the following short dialogue; and I found four lines written on the back of the title-page which put me in mind of you.

Atheist. Me! why did they put you in mind of me?

Stud. I'll tell you presently; come hither. [*He retires into a back room, and calls the other after him.*]

Ath. Well, now tell me.

Stud. Because I think they are very fit for such an atheistical wretch as you to read.

Ath. You are very civil.

Stud. You know you deserve it.

Ath. Come, let me see them, however.

Stud. Let me look in your face all the while, then.

Ath. No, you shan't.

Stud. Then you shan't see them.

Ath. Well, let it alone, then.

Stud. Come, give me your hand; you shall see them if you will promise to read them over three times.

Ath. There's my hand, I'll read them out to you.

Stud. I'll hold your hand all the while, because I'll be sure of your performance.

Ath. I'll warrant you I'll read them. [*He reads.*]

> "But if it should fall out, as who can tell,
> That there may be a God, a heaven, and hell,*
> Had I not best consider well, for fear
> 'T should be too late when my mistakes appear?"

[* *He held him by the hand till that word, and then let it go, pressing gently one of his fingers.*]

Stud. Well, what do you say to them?

Ath. I 'll tell you my thoughts farther by-and-by, but first tell me, what did you press my hand for when you let it go?

Stud. Did you feel no motion within you when you read those words, "there may be a God"?

Ath. What motion? What do you talk of?

Stud. Come, do not deny it, for I am a witness against you.

Ath. Witness, for what? I have killed nobody, I have robbed nobody; if you would turn informer, I value not your evidence.

Stud. No, no, I shall not turn informer of that kind, but I am a witness in your Maker's behalf.

Ath. What can you witness?

Stud. I 'll tell you what I can witness; I can testify that your own conscience is against you in your impious denying the existence of that God that gave you life; you could not conceal it; I tell you I felt it.

Ath. How do you pretend to know what my conscience dictates to me, or what the result of secret reflections may be in the mind? You may be mistaken; have a care, you know you are not to bear false witness.

Stud. 'T is in vain to struggle with it — 't is not to be concealed; you betrayed yourself, I tell you.

Ath. How betrayed myself? you are mighty dark in your expressions.

Stud. Did I not tell you I would look in your face all the while you read? Did I not see into the distraction of your soul? Did you not turn pale at the very words, when your tongue said, "there may be a God"? Was there not a visible horror in your countenance when you read the word HEAVEN? a horror which signified a sense of your having no share in it, or hope about it? And did I not feel a trem-

bling in your very joints, as I held you by the hand, when you read the word HELL?

Ath. And was that it you held me by the hand for?

Stud. Indeed it was; I was persuaded I should find it, for I could never believe that an atheist had always a hell within him, even while he braved it out against a hell without him.

Ath. You speak enough to fright one; how can you say so positively a thing which you cannot be sure of?

Stud. Never add sin to sin; 't is in vain to deny it.

Ath. Well, well, it 's none of your business; who made you my father confessor? [*He is a little angry.*]

Stud. Nay, do not be angry with your friend; and though you are, do but take the hint, and be as angry as you will.

Ath. What hint? What is it you aim at? Your hints are all so general, I can make nothing of them.

Stud. I aim at nothing but your eternal felicity; I thought those lines very apposite to your case, and was wishing you had them before I happened to see you. I thought that such a reflection in the case of atheism, so natural, so plain, especially blessed from Him whose secret voice can effectually reach the mind, might be some means to open your eyes.

Ath. Open my eyes! — to what?

Stud. To something that I am persuaded you see already in part, though I find you struggle hard against your own convictions.

Ath. What is this something you speak of?

Stud. I mean in a few words what the lines you have read mean, viz., that perhaps there may be a God, a heaven, and hell.

Ath. I don't know but there may. [*He observes tears stand in his eyes.*]

Stud. Well, I see it begins to touch you; if you are uncertain, that is a step to conviction; and the rest of the words you have read are a most natural inference in your case.

> "You 'd best consider well, for fear
> 'T should be too late when your mistakes appear.

Ath. What would you have me consider?

Stud. I am not able to enter into that part now; the first thing is to persuade you to look in; listen to the voice of conscience; I am satisfied you stand convicted at that bar; you cannot plead not guilty there.

Ath. Convicted of what?

Stud. Of having acted contrary to the light of nature, of reason, and indeed of common-sense; most impiously denied the God whose air you breathe in, whose earth you tread on, whose food you eat, whose clothes you wear, who is your life, and will be your Judge.

Ath. I do not absolutely deny; I tell you I don't know but there may be a God.

Stud. Don't you know but there may! O sir, I beseech you, repent; for certainly there is a God, depend upon it; I say so.

Ath. You fright me. [*He starts and looks surprised.*]

Stud. Indeed I think it may well fright you.

Ath. But you fright me upon a quite different account from what you imagine; I am indeed very much surprised, and so would you too, if you knew the circumstance.

Stud. What circumstance?

Ath. Pray did you bear those words spoken anywhere to-day before you spoke them?

Stud. No, not I.

Ath. Was you at Mr. ——'s chamber about half-an-hour ago?

Stud. I have not been there this month past; I have given over visiting him, and all such as he is, long ago.

Ath. Have you seen him to-day, or when did you last see him? — did he speak those words to you, or you to him?

Stud. I have not seen him since I saw him with you about fourteen days ago, when your discourse (even both of you) was so blasphemous and so atheistical as made my very heart tremble, and I resolved never to come into company with either of you again, and it was that very discourse that made me think of you when I found those lines in this book. I should think it an evident discovery of God, and what I might hope should best forward your conviction, if His providence should have sent you to this door at that minute to receive the hint on this occasion.

Ath. There is something more than common in everything that has happened to me to-day.

Stud. If you would explain yourself a little I might say more; but you know very well I cannot make the least guess at what you mean.

Ath. Ask me no more questions; there must be a God or a devil in being. [*He looks wildly and amazed.*]

Stud. Dear friend, there are both, depend upon it; but I beseech you, compose your mind, and do not receive the conviction with horror, but with comfort and hope.

Ath. One or other of them has been concerned in what has happened to me to-day; it has been a strange day with me.

Stud. If it relates only to these things, perhaps it

may be of use to you to communicate the particulars, at least it may give some vent to the oppression of thought which you seem to be under; you cannot open your mind to one that has more earnest desires to do you good, though perhaps not sufficiently furnished to advise you.

Ath. I must tell it or burst. [*Here he gave him the whole story of his going to his friend's chamber in order to take him with him to the wicked club they had kept, and how he had met him at the door, and said the same words to him that the Student had repeated, and when he had done, says he to his friend*] — And who now do you think must dictate the same words to him, and afterwards to you, to say to me on the same occasion?

Stud. Who do I think? Nay, who do you think?

Ath. Who? the devil, if there is a devil.

Stud. Why, do you think the devil preaches repentance? [*He stands stock still, and says not a word, which the other perceiving, goes on*] — Pray think seriously, for I see it does a little touch your reason. Is it likely the devil should bid either of us, or both of us, entreat you to repent? Is it the devil, think you, that would pronounce the certainty of the great truth I speak of? Is it his business to convince you that there is a God?

Ath. That 's very true.

Stud. One thing, however, I 'll say in Satan's behalf, and that is, that he never came up to your height of sinning. The devil has frequently set up himself, and persuaded poor deluded people to worship him as a God; but, to do him justice, he never had the impudence to deny the being of a God; that 's a sin purely human, and even among men very modern too, the invention of witty men, as they call themselves — a way they have lately found out

to cherish superlative wickedness, and flatter themselves that they shall have no audit of their accounts in a future state; of whom it may indeed be said in that particular, they have outsinned the devil.

Ath. Indeed I think we have.

Stud. I wish you would consider a little farther of it.

Ath. What can men consider that have gone that length?

Stud. Yes, yes; remember what St. Peter said to Simon the sorcerer.

Ath. What was that?

Stud. Read Acts viii. 22; "Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."

Ath. No, no; the last of your verses is against me there most directly.

"It 's all TOO LATE, now my mistakes appear."

Stud. No, no; remember what you said, that it must be a God or a devil.

Ath. What is that to the purpose?

Stud. Why, you seemed satisfied that it could not be from the devil.

Ath. But what the better am I for that, if the other is my enemy?

Stud. Much the better if it was from God, if the words you heard were from God, and that two unconcerned persons so eminently concurred in speaking to you; you cannot believe God would bid you REPENT if it was too late, or if He were your irreconcilable enemy; on the contrary, if you believe it to be the voice of His providence, you ought to listen to and obey it.

Ath. You have a strange power of persuasion, there is no resisting your argument.

Stud. It is not in me to persuade, but Heaven may make use of me to convince.

Ath. To convince is to persuade; I am convinced that I have been a dreadful wretch.

Stud. I am persuaded you were convinced of that before.

Ath. I cannot deny but my heart always struck me — a kind of chill horror ran through my veins, when I have uttered the blasphemous opinions that I have been drawn into; my very blood stagnated at the thought of it, and I look back on it with astonishment.

Stud. I tell you, I felt a tremor even in your flesh when you read the words, a God, a heaven, a hell.

Ath. I confess to you my very heart sunk within me at the words *who can tell;* my soul answered that I could tell myself that it both is and must be so.

Stud. Conscience is a faithful and never-failing evidence in his Maker's behalf.

Ath. It is a very terrible evidence against me, and where will it end?

Stud. I hope it will end where it began, I mean in a heavenly call to you to repentance.

Ath. That is not always the consequence of conviction.

Stud. You must therefore distinguish again of what proceeds from heaven, what from hell, the voice of God, and the voice of the devil; the first calls upon you to repent, the last prompts you to despair.

Ath. Despair seems to be the natural consequence of denying God, for it shuts out the power that can alone restore the mind.

Stud. The greater is that love which refuses to be shut out, that sends such a heavenly summons to

you to repent, and in so eminent a manner; it is not your having been an enemy, a blasphemer, a denier of God; Peter denied Christ three times, nay, the third time he even abjured Him, and yet, mark the words — the Lord looked on him, and immediately he repented.

Ath. My case is worse than Peter's.

Stud. And yet you see you are called on to repent.

Ath. I think you are called to make me repent; there 's no answering you.

Stud. Amen; may I have the blessing of being an instrument to so good a work; there seems to be something extraordinary in it all.

Ath. It 's all a surprise to me how came I hither.

Stud. Nay, how came I hither? — How came this book here? — Who writ the lines in the frontispiece? — How came I to read them? — 'Tis all a dream to me!

Ath. How came you to think of me upon the reading them? And how came I here just at the moment, and out of my way too?

[*He lifts up his hands and cries out*, "There is a God, *certainly there is; I am convinced of it; it must be so.*"]

Stud. Nothing more certain; nor is there any doubt but all these things are of Him.

Ath. But there are yet greater things behind; I wish you would go with me to my friend Mr. ——'s chamber; I am persuaded something yet more extraordinary must have befallen him.

Stud. With all my heart.

[*They both go to the first gentleman's chamber, and find him at home, very much out of order, but willing enough to discourse with them.*]

Ath. Well, friend of mine, I hope you are better disposed to your friends than when I saw you last.

Gent. Truly, when I saw you last, I was disposed

of by the devil, and so, I doubt, were you; I hope I shall never come into that horrid place again.

Ath. What horrid place?

Gent. You know where I mean; I tremble at the very thoughts of the place, and much more of the company; I wish I could prevail upon you to come no more among them too; I assure you, if I know myself, and if God would assist me to do it, I would much rather go to a stake to be burnt.

Stud. I rejoice in such an alteration, sir, upon you, and I hope our friend here is of the same mind; long may it continue in you both.

Ath. Well, pray tell us something of the occasion of this happy alteration, for it will seem still more strange how you came to be instrumental to my change, if I know nothing of the means that brought about your own.

Gent. Mine! I assure you it was all from heaven; not the light that shone about St. Paul was more immediately from heaven than the stroke that touched my soul; it is true I had no voice without, but a voice has spoken (I hope) effectually to my understanding; I had voice enough to tell me how I was in the hands of that Power, that Majesty, that God, whom I had wickedly, and with a hardness not to be expressed, disowned and denied.

Stud. Pray, sir, if you care to have it known, give us some account of the particulars of this wonderful thing.

Gent. Sir, I shall do it freely; I think I ought not to conceal it.

[*Here he gives an account of the surprise he was in by the lightning, how he was stopped in his way to his wicked company, and went back to his chamber.*]

Ath. Well, now I will no more wonder at the salutation you gave me when I came to call you, but thank you for it.

Gent. What salutation?

Ath. Why, when I was at your chamber about two hours ago.

Gent. You at my chamber!

Ath. Nay, you need not conceal it, for I have told our friend here all the story.

Gent. I know nothing of what you talk of, much less what you mean.

Ath. Nay, what need you go about to conceal it? I tell you I do not take it ill; I hope I may have reason to be thankful for what you said to me, and look upon it as spoken from Heaven; for I assure you, it has been an introduction to that light in my thoughts which I hope shall never be extinguished.

Gent. Dear friend, as I believe you are serious, so I hope you believe I am so; I profess I know nothing of all you talk about.

Ath. Why, was I not at your door this afternoon a little after the great shower of rain?

Gent. Not that I know of.

Ath. Why, did not I knock at your chamber-door, and you come to the door yourself and speak to me?

Gent. Not to-day, I am very sure of it.

Ath. Am I awake? Are you Mr——? am I sure we are all alive, and know what we are saying, and to whom?

Gent. I beseech you unriddle yourself, for I am surprised.

Ath. Why, about three o'clock this afternoon I came to this chamber-door; I knocked; you came and opened the door; I began to speak, you interrupted me, and——

[*Here he repeats the passage at large, and his own thoughts and resentment, as before.*]

Gent. Depend upon it, 't was some voice from heaven, it was nothing of mine; I have not been at

the door since two of the clock, when I came first in, but have been on the bed, or in my study ever since, wholly taken up with my own thoughts, and very much indisposed.

[*The young man turns pale, and falls into a swoon.*]

There was a great deal more belonging to this story, but it is too long for the present purpose; I have related this part on several accounts, and it hits the purpose I am upon many ways.

(1.) Here is a visible evidence of God, and of His being and nature, fixed so in the mind, that not the most hardened atheist can deny it; nature recoils at every endeavour to suppress it, and the very pulsation of his blood shall discover and acknowledge it.

(2.) Yet even in this we see how the power of imagination may be worked up by the secret agency of an unknown hand, how many things concurred to make this man believe he had seen an apparition, and heard a voice; and yet there was nothing in it but the voice of a man unseen and mistaken. The young man was so surprised at his friend's declaring that he knew nothing of his coming there, that he concluded it had been all a vision or apparition that opened the door, and that it was a voice that had spoken to him, of what kind he knew not; and the reflection upon this surprised him so much as threw him into a swoon, and yet here was neither vision or voice, but that of an ordinary person, and one who meant well and said well.

It is not to be doubted but that many an apparition related with a great deal of certainty in the world, and of which good ends have followed, has been no more than such a serious mistake as this.

But before I leave it, let me observe that this should not at all hinder us from making a very good use of such things; for many a voice may be directed

from heaven that is not immediately spoken from thence; as when the children cried Hosannah to our Saviour, they fulfilled the Scripture, which said, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast ordained praise;" so doubtless He that made all things and created all things, may appoint instruction to be given by fortuitous accidents, and may direct concurring circumstances to touch and affect the mind as much and as effectually as if they had been immediate and miraculous.

Thus was the two persons happening to say the same words to the atheist, the strange reading of those lines when the person came into the bookseller's shop, the incident of his running into the shop for shelter, and many the like things of the same nature, and ordered in the same manner as the cock crowing when Peter denied Christ, which, though wonderfully concurrent with what his blessed Master had foretold, yet was no extraordinary thing in a cock, who naturally crows at such a time of the morning.

In a word, all these things serve to convince us of a great superintendency of divine Providence in the minutest affairs of this world, of a manifest existence of the invisible world, of the reality of spirits, and of the intelligence between us and them. I hope I have said nothing of it to misguide anybody, or to assist them to delude themselves, having spoken of it with the utmost seriousness in my design, and with a sincere desire for a general good.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

I

Captain Woodes Rogers's Account of the Rescue of Alexander Selkirk.

[" A Cruising Voyage round the World," second edition (1718), pp. 123–130.]

AT seven this morning [Jan. 31, 1709] we made the island of Juan Fernandez. . . . In the afternoon we hoisted our pinnace out; Captain Dover, with the boat's crew, went in her to go ashore, though we could not be less than four leagues off. As soon as the pinnace was gone, I went on board the " Duchess," who admired our boat attempting going ashore at that distance from land. 'T was against my inclination, but to oblige Captain Dover I consented to let her go. As soon as it was dark we saw a light ashore. Our boat was then about a league from the island, and bore away for the ships as soon as she saw the lights. We put our lights abroad for the boat, though some were of opinion the lights we saw were our boat's lights; but as night came on, it appeared too large for that. We fired our quarter-deck gun and several muskets, showing lights in our mizen and fore shrouds, that our boat might find us whilst we plied in the lee of the island. About two in the morning our boat came on board, having been two hours on board the " Duchess," that took them up astern of us; we were glad they got well off, because it began to blow. We are all convinced the

light is on the shore, and design to make our ships ready to engage, believing them to be French ships at anchor, and we must either fight them or want water. We stood on the back side along the south end of the island, in order to lay in with the first southerly wind, which Captain Dampier told us generally blows there all day long. In the morning, being past the island, we tacked to lay it in close aboard the land, and about ten o'clock opened the south end of the island, and ran close aboard the land that begins to make the north-east side.

The flaws came heavy off the shore, and we were forced to reef our topsails when we opened the middle bay, where we expected to find our enemy, but saw all clear, and no ships in that nor the other bay next the north-west end. These two bays are all that ships ride in which recruit on this island; but the middle bay is by much the best. We guessed there had been ships there, but that they were gone on sight of us. We sent our yawl ashore about noon, with Captain Dover, Mr. Fry, and six men, all armed. Meanwhile we and the "Duchess" kept turning to get in, and such heavy flaws came off the land, that we were forced to let go our topsail sheet, keeping all hands to stand by our sails, for fear of the wind's carrying them away; but when the flaws were gone we had little or no wind. These flaws proceeded from the land, which is very high in the middle of the island. Our boat did not return; so we sent our pinnace, with the men armed, to see what was the occasion of the yawl's stay, for we were afraid that the Spaniards had a garrison there, and might have seized them. We put out a signal for our boat, and the "Duchess" showed a French ensign. Immediately our pinnace returned from the shore, and brought abundance of cray-fish, with a man clothed in goat's skins, who looked wilder than

the first owners of them. He had been on the island four years and four months, being left there by Captain Stradling in the "Cinque Ports;" his name was Alexander Selkirk, a Scotchman, who had been master of the "Cinque Ports," a ship that came here last with Captain Dampier, who told me that this was the best man in her; so I immediately agreed with him to be a mate on board our ship. 'T was he that made the fire last night when he saw our ships, which he judged to be English. During his stay here he saw several ships pass by, but only two came to anchor. As he went to view them, he found them to be Spaniards, and retired from them, upon which they shot at him. Had they been French, he would have submitted, but chose to risk his dying alone on the island rather than fall into the hands of the Spaniards in these parts; because he apprehended they would murder him, or make a slave of him in the mines, for he feared they would spare no stranger that might be capable of discovering the South Seas.

The Spaniards had landed before he knew what they were, and they came so near him that he had much ado to escape; for they not only shot at him, but pursued him to the woods, where he climbed to the top of a tree, at the foot of which they made water, and killed several goats just by, but went off without discovering him. He told us that he was born at Largo, in the county of Fife, in Scotland, and was bred a sailor from his youth. The reason of his being left here was a difference betwixt him and his captain; which, together with the ship's being leaky, made him willing rather to stay here than go along with him at first; and when he was at last willing, the captain would not receive him. He had been in the island before to wood and water, when two of the ship's company were left upon it for

six months till the ship returned, being chased thence by two French South Sea ships.

He had with him his clothes and bedding, with a firelock, some powder, bullets, and tobacco, a hatchet, a knife, a kettle, a Bible, some practical pieces, and his mathematical instruments and books. He diverted and provided for himself as well as he could, but for the first eight months had much ado to bear up against melancholy, and the terror of being left alone in such a desolate place. He built two huts with pimento trees, covered them with long grass, and lined them with the skins of goats, which he killed with his gun as he wanted, so long as his powder lasted, which was but a pound; and that being almost spent, he got fire by rubbing two sticks of pimento wood together upon his knee. In the lesser hut, at some distance from the other, he dressed his victuals; and in the larger he slept and employed himself in reading, singing psalms, and praying; so that he said he was a better Christian while in this solitude than ever he was before, or than, he was afraid, he should ever be again.

At first he never ate anything till hunger constrained him, partly for grief, and partly for want of bread and salt. Nor did he go to bed till he could watch no longer; the pimento wood, which burnt very clear, served him both for firing and candle, and refreshed him with its fragrant smell. He might have had fish enough, but could not eat them for want of salt, because they occasioned a looseness; except crayfish, which are there as large as lobsters, and very good. These he sometimes boiled, and at other times broiled, as he did his goats' flesh, of which he made very good broth, for they are not so rank as ours. He kept an account of 500 that he killed while there, and caught as many more, which he marked on the ear, and let go. When his powder

failed, he took them by speed of feet; for his way of living and continual exercise of walking and running cleared him of all gross humours; so that he ran with wonderful swiftness through the woods, and up the rocks and hills, as we perceived when we employed him to catch goats for us. We had a bull-dog, which we sent, with several of our nimblest runners, to help him in catching goats; but he distanced and tired both the dog and the men, catched the goats, and brought them to us on his back.

He told us that his agility in pursuing a goat had once like to have cost him his life: he pursued it with so much eagerness that he catched hold of it on the brink of a precipice, of which he was not aware, the bushes hiding it from him; so that he fell with the goat down the said precipice, a great height, and was so stunned and bruised with the fall that he narrowly escaped with his life; and when he came to his senses, found the goat dead under him. He lay there about twenty-four hours, and was scarce able to crawl to his hut, which was about a mile distant, or to stir abroad again for ten days.

He came at last to relish his meat well enough without salt or bread; and in the season had plenty of good turnips, which had been sowed there by Captain Dampier's men, and have now overspread some acres of ground. He had enough of good cabbage from the cabbage trees, and seasoned his meat with the fruit of the pimento trees, which is the same as Jamaica pepper, and smells deliciously. He found also a black pepper called malageta, which was very good to expel wind, and against griping in the guts.

He soon wore out all his shoes and clothes by running through the woods; and at last, being forced to shift without them, his feet became so hard that he ran everywhere without difficulty, and it was

some time before he could wear shoes after we found him; for, not being used to any so long, his feet swelled when he came first to wear them again.

After he had conquered his melancholy, he diverted himself sometimes by cutting his name on the trees, and the time of his being left, and continuance there. He was at first much pestered with cats and rats, that bred in great numbers from some of each species which had got ashore from ships that put in there to wood and water. The rats gnawed his feet and clothes whilst asleep, which obliged him to cherish the cats with his goats' flesh, by which many of them became so tame, that they would lie about him in hundreds, and soon delivered him from the rats. He likewise tamed some kids, and to divert himself would, now and then, sing and dance with them and his cats; so that, by the care of Providence, and vigour of his youth, being now about thirty years old, he came at last to conquer all the inconveniences of his solitude, and to be very easy.

When his clothes wore out, he made himself a coat and a cap of goat's skins, which he stitched together with little thongs of the same, that he cut with his knife. He had no other needle but a nail; and when his knife was wore to the back, he made others, as well as he could, of some iron hoops that were left ashore, which he beat thin and ground upon stones. Having some linen cloth by him, he sewed himself shirts with a nail, and stitched them with the worsted of his old stockings, which he pulled out on purpose. He had his last shirt on when we found him on the island.

At his first coming on board us, he had so much forgot his language, for want of use, that we could scarce understand him, for he seemed to speak his words by halves. We offered him a dram, but he would not touch it, having drank nothing but water

since his being there; and 't was some time before he could relish our victuals.

He could give us an account of no other product of the island than what we have mentioned, except small black plums, which are very good, but hard to come at, the trees which bear them growing on high mountains and rocks. Pimento trees are plenty here, and we saw some of sixty feet high, and about two yards thick, and cotton trees higher, and more than four fathom round in the stock.

The climate is so good that the trees and grass are verdant all the year. The winter lasts no longer than June and July, and is not then severe, there being only a small frost and a little hail, but sometimes great rains. The heat of the summer is equally moderate, and there 's not much thunder or tempestuous weather of any sort. We saw no venomous or savage creature on the island, nor any other sort of beast, but goats, &c., as above mentioned, the first of which had been put ashore here on purpose for a breed by Juan Fernandez, a Spaniard, who settled there with some families for a time, till the continent of Chili began to submit to the Spaniards; which, being more profitable, tempted them to quit this island, which is capable of maintaining a good number of people, and of being made so strong that they could not be easily dislodged.

Rengrose, in his account of Captain Sharpe's voyage, and other buccaneers, mentions one who had escaped ashore here, out of a ship which was cast away with all the rest of the company, and says he lived five years alone, before he had the opportunity of another ship to carry him off. Captain Dampier talks of a Mosquito Indian that belonged to Captain Watlin, who, being a-hunting in the woods when the captain left the island, lived there three years alone, and shifted much in the same manner as Mr.

Selkirk did, till Captain Dampier came hither in 1684 and carried him off. The first that went ashore was one of his countrymen, and they saluted one another, first, by prostrating themselves by turns on the ground, and then embracing. But whatever there is in these stories, this of Mr. Selkirk I know to be true; and his behaviour afterwards gives me reason to believe the account he gave me how he spent his time, and bore up under such an affliction, in which nothing but the Divine Providence could have supported any man.

II

Steele's Account of Selkirk

[*The Englishman*, December 1–3, 1713]

Under the title of this paper, I do not think it foreign to my design to speak of a man born in her Majesty's dominions, and relate an adventure in his life so uncommon, that it is doubtful whether the like has happened to any other of the human race. The person I speak of is Alexander Selkirk, whose name is familiar to men of curiosity, from the fame of his having lived four years and four months alone in the island of Juan Fernandez. I had the pleasure, frequently, to converse with the man soon after his arrival in England in the year 1711. It was matter of great curiosity to hear him, as he is a man of good sense, give an account of the different revolutions in his own mind in that long solitude. When we consider how painful absence from company, for the space of but one evening, is to the generality of mankind, we may have a sense how painful this necessary and constant solitude was to a man bred a

sailor, and ever accustomed to enjoy and suffer, eat, drink, and sleep, and perform all offices of life, in fellowship and company. He was put ashore from a leaky vessel, with the captain of which he had had an irreconcilable difference; and he chose rather to take his fate in this place than in a crazy vessel, under a disagreeable commander. His portion was a sea-chest, his wearing clothes and bedding, a fire-lock, a pound of gunpowder, a large quantity of bullets, a flint and steel, a few pounds of tobacco, a hatchet, a knife, a kettle, a Bible, and other books of devotion; together with pieces that concerned navigation, and his mathematical instruments. Resentment against his officer, who had ill-used him, made him look forward on this change of life as the more eligible one, till the instant in which he saw the vessel put off; at which moment his heart yearned within him, and melted at the parting with his comrades and all human society at once. He had in provisions for the sustenance of life but the quantity of two meals, the island abounding only with wild goats, cats, and rats. He judged it most probable that he should find more immediate and easy relief by finding shell-fish on the shore than seeking game with his gun. He accordingly found great quantities of turtles, whose flesh is extremely delicious, and of which he frequently ate very plentifully on his first arrival, till it grew disagreeable to his stomach, except in jellies. The necessities of hunger and thirst were his greatest diversion from the reflections on his lonely condition. When those appetites were satisfied, the desire of society was as strong a call upon him, and he appeared to himself least necessitous when he wanted everything; for the supports of his body were easily attained, but the eager longings for seeing again the face of man, during the interval of craving bodily appetites, were hardly sup-

portable. He grew dejected, languid, and melancholy, scarce able to refrain from doing himself violence, till by degrees, by the force of reason and frequent reading the Scriptures, and turning his thoughts upon the study of navigation, after the space of eighteen months he grew thoroughly reconciled to his condition. When he had made this conquest, the vigour of his health, disengagement from the world, a constant cheerful, serene sky and a temperate air, made his life one continual feast, and his being much more joyful than it had before been irksome. He now, taking delight in everything, made the hut in which he lay, by ornaments which he cut down from a spacious wood on the side of which it was situated, the most delicious bower, fanned with continual breezes and gentle aspirations of wind, that made his repose after the chase equal to the most sensual pleasures.

I forgot to observe, that during the time of his dissatisfaction monsters of the deep, which frequently lay on the shore, added to the terrors of his solitude; the dreadful howlings and voices seemed too terrible to be made for human ears; but upon the recovery of his temper he could with pleasure not only hear their voices, but approach the monsters themselves with great intrepidity. He speaks of sea-lions, whose jaws and tails were capable of seizing or breaking the limbs of a man if he approached them. But at that time his spirits and life were so high, that he could act so regularly and unconcerned, that merely from being unruffled in himself he killed them with the greatest ease imaginable; for observing that though their jaws and tails were so terrible, yet the animals being mighty slow in working themselves round, he had nothing to do but place himself exactly opposite to their middle, and as close to them as possible, and he despatched them with his hatchet at will.

The precautions which he took against want, in case of sickness, was to lame kids when very young, so as that they might recover their health, but never be capable of speed. These he had in great numbers about his hut; and as he was himself in full vigour, he could take at full speed the swiftest goat running on a promontory, and never failed of catching them, but on a descent.

His habitation was extremely pestered with rats, which gnawed his clothes and feet when sleeping. To defend himself against them he fed and tamed numbers of young kitlings, who lay about his bed and preserved him from the enemy. When his clothes were quite worn out he dried and tacked together the skins of goats, with which he clothed himself, and was inured to pass through woods, bushes, and brambles with as much carelessness and precipitance as any other animal. It happened once to him that running on the summit of a hill he made a stretch to seize a goat, with which under him he fell down a precipice and lay senseless for the space of three days, the length of which he measured by the moon's growth since his last observation. This manner of life grew so exquisitely pleasant, that he never had a moment heavy upon his hands; his nights were untroubled and his days joyous, from the practice of temperance and exercise. It was his manner to use stated hours and places for exercises of devotion, which he performed aloud, in order to keep up the faculties of speech, and to utter himself with greater energy.

When I first saw him I thought if I had not been let into his character and story I could have discerned that he had been much separated from company from his aspect and gesture; there was a strong but cheerful seriousness in his look, and a certain disregard to the ordinary things about him, as if he had

been sunk in thought. When the ship which brought him off the island came in, he received them with the greatest indifference with relation to the prospect of going off with them, but with great satisfaction in an opportunity to refresh and help them. The man frequently bewailed his return to the world, which could not, he said, with all its enjoyments, restore him to the tranquillity of his solitude. Though I had frequently conversed with him, after a few months' absence he met me in the street, and though he spoke to me, I could not recollect that I had seen him; familiar discourse in this town had taken off the loneliness of his aspect, and quite altered the air of his face.

This plain man's story is a memorable example that he is happiest who confines his want to natural necessities; and he that goes further in his desires, increases his want in proportion to his acquisitions; or, to use his own expression, "I am now worth eight hundred pounds, but shall never be so happy as when I was not worth a farthing."

THE END.

Keating